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Israelites versus other Nations



ISRAELITES

VS

OTHER NATIONS

by

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Edited by

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Dedication

I am extremely grateful
to
Almighty Allah

Who afforded me the opportunity to unveil the truth about the
most exalted prophets of the Lord whose image had been
distorted by the Israelites.

This work is, therefore, dedicated
Firstly to
The Almighty Allah

And then to
The following pious victims of their assertions:

Adam (pbAh)
Noah (pbAh)
Abraham (pbAh)
Lot (pbAh)
Ishmā'el (pbAh)
Isaac (pbAh)
And
Jacob (pbAh)

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Common and Bible Versions' Abbreviations

AD/CE	anno domini (Latin), in the year of the Lord, Common/ Christian Era.
Ar	Arab, Arabia, Arabian, Arabic.
B	Bible.
BC	Before Christ; Bible Commentary; Biblical Commentary.
BCE	Before Christian/Common Era.
BD	Bible Dictionary.
c/ca	About, approximately (Latin circa)
CB	Commentary of the Bible.
CE	Common Era: secular form of AD.
Cf	confer: compare.
Ch	Chapter.
DB	Dictionary of the Bible.
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls.
E	East.
E	Elohist tradition of some books of the OT of the Bible.
Ed	Editor, edited by, edition.
Edn	Edition.
e.g./eg	for example (Latin exempli gratia).
Enc	Encyclopedia/Encyclopaedia/Encyclopedic.
Esp	especially.
Hm	Headmaster.
Heb	Hebrew.
i.e.	that is, that means, namely.
J	Jehovist or Yahwist tradition of some books of the OT of the Bible.
JE	Text of the OT based on the combination of the E & J Traditions of the Bible.
L	Latin.
LLX	Septuagint (70): Greek Tr. of the OT claimed to be accomplished by 70 scholars in Alexandria between 250 –150 BC.
MS/MSS	Manuscript/Manuscripts.
MT/Mt	Massoretic /Masoretic Text of the OT; Matthew; Mount.
N	North.
NT	New Testament of the Bible Contains 27 books: 4 Gospels, Acts, Epistles (letters), and lastly Revelations. It was originally written in Greek, whereas Jesus Christ delivered his message in the Aramaic language.
op.cit.	in the work already quoted (Latin opere citato).
OT	Old Testament of the Bible Consists of 39 books: The first five are collectively called the Pentateuch or Torah. It was originally written in Heb.
(pbAh)	peace and blessings of Allah upon him.
p/pp	Page/pages.
P	Priestly tradition of the OT of the Bible.
Pbl/pbg	Publisher(s) Publication(s) /Publishing/.
Q	Quelle (a German word), i.e. source. A hypothetical source of the passages shared by the gospels of Matthew and Luke.
Rvd	Revised.
S	South, southern.
Sic.	[L] thus, so: used within brackets, [sic], to show that a quoted passage, esp. one containing some error or s.th. questionable, is precisely reproduced.

s.o.	Some one.
s.th.	Some thing.
St	Saint.
s.v.	Under the word or heading.
Tr.	Translator, translation, translated by.
Uni./Univ.	University.
v/vv	Verse/verses of the Bible.
V	Version (Tr.) of the Bible.
Vol.	Volume.
Vulg.	Vulgate, the Latin Tr. Of the Bible accomplished by St Jerome in late 4th century AD.
W	West, western.
Y	Yahwist (Jehovist) tradition of the Bible.
(...)	It indicates that some word, words, sentence, sentences, line, or lines have been left over from the original quotation.
(....)	It shows that a sizeable text has been omitted from the original quotation.
[]	The square brackets are used to insert something by the Tr./Ed., which did not originally exist in the quotation.
AV/KJV	Authorized Version/King James Version.
ARV	American Revised Version
ASV	American Standard Version
AT	American Translation.
CCB	The Christian Community Bible (Manila: Divine Word Pbln, 1988).
CEV	Contemporary English Version (NY: American Bible Society, 1995).
Douay V	Douay Challoner & Confraternity Text (Chicago: Catholic Press, 1950)
DRV	Douay Rheims Vulgate (NY: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1914).
ERV	English Revised Version
EV	English Version
GNB/TEV	Good News Bible/ Today's English Version -do-.
GNB:REV	Good News Bible (Revd. Edn), Minto: The B. Scty. in Australia Inc. NSW.
HB	Hebrew Bible
JB	Jerusalem Bible
LB	The Living Bible (Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1976)
LXX	Septuagint
MT	The Torah, The Mesoretic Text (Jewish Pbln. Society of America).
NAB	New American Bible, Catholic Bible Association, 1991.
NASB	The New American Standard Bible, Cambridge Univ. Press 1977.
NEB	The New English Bible, Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.
NIV	New international Version, London, 1984.
NJB	The New Jerusalem Bible, Standard Edn, Bombay: St. Paul's, 1993.
NKJV	New King James Version.
NLTr.	New Living Translation, 1996:
NOAB.	The New Oxf. Annotated Bible:
NRSV.	New Revised Standard Version:
RSV.	Revised Standard Version.
RBV	Revised Berkeley Version:
RV	Revised Version
Peshitta	(or Syriac) The Authorised B. of the Church of the East, 1957.
Knox	Ronald A.Knox, Tr. From the Vulgate, Macmillan & Co. 1957.
WEB	World English Bible

Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible

1. The Jewish Bible/OT

Abbreviation:	Book:	Abbreviation:	Book:
Amos or Am	Amos	Judg. or Jgs	Judges
1 Chron. or 1 Chr	1 Chronicles	1 Kings or 1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Chron. or 2 Chr	2 Chronicles	2 Kings or 2 Kgs	2 Kings
Dan. or Dn	Daniel	Lam. or Lam	Lamentations
Deut. or Dt	Deuteronomy	Lev. or Lv	Leviticus
Eccles. or Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mal. or Mal	Malachi
Esther or Est	Esther	Mic. or Mi	Micah
Exod. or Ex	Exodus	Nah. or Na	Nahum
Ezek. or Ez	Ezekiel	Neh. or Neh	Nehemiah
Ezra or Ezr	Ezra	Num. or Nm	Numbers
Gen. or Gn	Genesis	Obad. or Ob	Obadiah
Hab. or Hb	Habakkuk	Prov. or Prv	Proverbs
Hag. or Hg	Haggai	Ps. (pl.Pss.) or	Psalms
Hosea or Hos	Hosea	Ps (pl. Pss)	
Isa. or Is	Isaiah	Ruth or Ru	Ruth
Jer. or Jer	Jeremiah	1 Sam. or 1 Sm	1 Samuel
Job or Jb	Job	2 Sam. or 2 Sm	2 Samuel
Joel or Jl	Joel	Song of Sol. or	Song of Solomon (=Song of Songs)
Jon. or Jon	Jonah	Sg	
Josh. or Jo	Joshua	Zech. or Zec	Zechariah
		Zeph. or Zep	Zephaniah

2. The New Testament

Abbreviation:	Book:	Abbreviation:	Book:
Acts	Acts of the Apostles	Luke or Lk	Luke
Apoc.	Apocalypse (=Revelation)	Mark or Mk	Mark
Col. or Col	Colossians	Matt. or Mt	Matthew
1 Cor. or 1 Cor	1 Corinthians	1 Pet. or 1 Pt	1 Peter
2 Cor. or 2 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Pet. or 2 Pt	2 Peter
Eph. or Eph	Ephesians	Philem. or Phlm	Philemon
Gal. or Gal	Galatians	Phil. or Phil	Philippians
Heb. or Heb	Hebrews	Rev. or Rv	Revelation (=Apocalypse)
James or Jas	James	Rom. or Rom	Romans
John or Jn	John (Gospel)	1Thess. or 1Thes	1 Thessalonians
1 John or 1 Jn	1 John (Epistle)	2Thess. or 2Thes	2 Thessalonians
2 John or 2 Jn	2 John (Epistle)	1 Tim. or 1 Tm	1 Timothy
3 John or 3 Jn	3 John (Epistle)	2 Tim. or 2 Tm	2 Timothy
Jude	Jude	Titus or Ti	Titus

Introduction

The Israelites were serving as slaves in Egypt about 3500 years ago. They had been enslaved by the Egyptians a considerable time after the death of Joseph (pbAh). The Bible records that the Egyptians had put the slave drivers on them:

So the Egyptians put slave drivers over them to crush their spirits with hard labor. The Israelites built the cities of Pithom¹ and Rameses² to serve as supply centers for the king.³

(...) and made their lives miserable by forcing them into cruel slavery. They made them work on their building projects and in their fields, and they had no pity on them.⁴

The Israelites continued to groan under the trouble and torture of the slave drivers for about three centuries. Then the

¹ According to *J. L. McKenzie's DB*, 1984, p. 678:

Pithom (Egyptian *Pr-itm*, 'house of [the god] Atum'), one of the cities in Egypt on which the Israelites worked (Ex 1:11). The city is more probably to be located in the valley which connects the Nile with Lake Timsah in the Isthmus [neck of land between two seas] of Suez. It was built after the accession of Seti I (1317 BC).

² According to *J. L. McKenzie's DB*, 1984, p. 717:

Raamses [sic] (Hb *ra'meses*, ra'ameses 'Re has begotten him'), a city in Egypt. The Hebrews were forced to work on its construction (Ex1:11) and from there set out on their journey to Canaan (Ex 12:37; Nm 33:3, 5). There is no doubt that Raamses [sic] is the Egyptian 'House of Ramses [sic]' built by the celebrated Pharaoh Ramses [sic] II and named after him. Egyptian inscriptions attest the magnificence of its construction. It was not until the 9th dynasty that the Pharaohs moved the royal residence from Thebes to the delta. The site of Raamses [sic] is also the site of Tanis, the Hyksos capital of Egypt.

³ Exo 1:11 GNB.

⁴ Exo 1:13-14 GNB.

Almighty took pity on them and chose Moses (pbAh) to deliver them from the slavery. God said to Moses (pbAh):

Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.⁵

Moses (pbAh) succeeded to rescue the Israelites after prolonged and hectic efforts and started leading them to the Promised Land so that they may enjoy freedom to live and to worship the Lord as per guidance from Him. On way to the Promised Land, the Israelites had reached Mount Sinai when the Lord bestowed on them the honor to be the trustees of His covenant and the law. God had commanded them that:

Do not add anything to what I command you, and do not take anything away. Obey the commands of the LORD your God that I have given you.⁶

To preserve the law in tact and to abide by the same was the prime duty of the Israelites. Their test and trial, therefore, started from the moment the Lord had given them the law to live by. God said to them:

Now, if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own people. The whole earth is mine, but you will be my chosen people, a people dedicated to me alone, and you will serve me as priests.⁷

The Israelites, however, were neither the first nor the last people to be chosen by the Lord. Many other nations had been tested and tried by the Lord before and after them. God, in fact

⁵ Exo 3:9-10 KJV.

⁶ Deu 4:2 GNB.

⁷ Exo 19:5-6 GNB.

has been sending His prophets to each and every nation in the world without any consideration of race, region or color of the people being put to test. Only the Israelites had been asserting scornfully their claim as the people of God chosen on the basis of their race. The said propagation can, therefore, be termed more appropriately as the pious wish of the exiled religionists of the Israelites than an historic fact.

God is the sole creator and eternal Lord God of the universe. He is an unchanging God and essentials of faith and obligations of humankind towards him had always remained the same. Adam (pbAh) was the first prophet of the Lord on earth and all true prophets after him preached worship of the same God as the only and the eternal God of the Universe. No widespread transgression of the commandments of the Lord has been reported up to the times of the prophets like Seth and Enoch. People of Noah (pbAh) were perhaps the first community who rejected the Lord and started worshipping idols and false gods instead of the Almighty. Due to their wickedness, they were drowned in the deluge.⁸ Although, Bible has nothing to tell us about other nations yet the Qur'ān has made repeated references to the transgressions and chastisements of the nations like 'Ād,⁹ the people of the prophet Hūd¹⁰ and

⁸ Gen Ch. 6 and 7.

⁹ Al-Qur'ān 7:65-72, 11:50-60, 46:21-25, 51:41-42, 69:6 etc. According to Gibb and Kramers' *Concise Enc. of Islam* (Brill: 2001, 13, s.v. 'Ād):

'Ād [was] an ancient tribe frequently mentioned in the Qur'ān. Its history may be learned only from sporadic indications; it was a mighty nation that lived immediately after the time of Noah, and which became haughty on account of its great prosperity (Qur'ān, vii. 69; xli. 15). The large edifices of the 'Ādites are spoken of in the Qur'ān, xxvi. 128 sqq.; cf. in lxxxix. 6-7 the expression 'Ād, Iram of the pillars', where *Iram* [qv] may designate either a tribe or a place. According to Qur'ān, xli. 21, the 'Ādites inhabited al-Ahḡāf (the sand dunes).

¹⁰ See footnote on 'Ād above.

Thamūd,¹¹ the people of prophet Sālih¹². Instead of abstaining from their wickedness, those nations had disdainfully rejected the signs of God and they even threatened to kill the prophets. God, therefore, obliterated the transgressors from the face of the Earth.

¹¹ Al-Qur'ān 7:73-78, 11:61-68, 26:141-157, 27:45-52 etc. According to *Concise Enc. of Islam* (p. 592, s.v. 'Thamūd'):

Just as there was a prophet named Hūd among the 'Ād so there was one called Sālih (b. 'Ubaid b. 'Āmir b. Sām) among the Thamūd. Challenged by his opponents, whose leader is said to have been Djunda' b. 'Amr, to give a sign of his divine mission, he conjured up a pregnant she camel out of a rock. The tendons of this animal, sacred and inviolable as 'Allah's camel', were however cut along with those of its foal by the scoffers. In punishment the whole people was doomed to destruction. The manner of their destruction is said in Sūra vii. 74 to have been *radīfa*, earthquake, in Sūra xii. 13, 17, *sā'ikā*, a thunderbolt. These expressions make it probable that tradition associated the fall of the Thamūd with one of the volcanic outbreaks which led to the formation of more or less extensive fields of lava called *h'arra* in Arabia. West of al-H'udjir lies one of the largest of these *h'arra*.

¹² According to *Concise Enc. of Islam*, Brill, 2001, p. 499:

[Sālih was] a prophet who was sent to the Arab people Thamūd. (...); he demanded that his countrymen should turn to him and pray to Allah alone (sūra vii. 73; xi. 61; xxvi. 141); he called their attention to the benefits received from God (vii. 74; li. 43) and prided himself on seeking for no reward from them (xxvi. 145). But they rejected him abruptly, called him bewitched (xxvi. 153), a man like themselves, who could make no claim to revelations (liv. 24); they could not surrender the religion of their fathers (xi. 62) and scorned the idea a day of judgement (lxix. 4). His appearance produced a schism in the people (xxvii. 45) for only the weak believed in him, while the strong scoffed at him (vii. 75). The only new feature was that they had placed their hope in him before he irritated them by his preaching (xi. 66), (...). Allah sent them as a sign a she camel (xvii. 59) and Sālih begged them to allow it to feed unharmed and to share water with it (vii. 73; xxvi. 155; liv. 28). But they lamed it and killed it (vii. 77; xi. 65; xxvi. 157) by the hand of a particularly godless individual among them (xci. 12; liv. 29) and scornfully asked Sālih to inflict the threatened punishment (vii. 77). He told them to hide three days in their houses (xi. 65); then a tremendous storm broke out (xi. 67; li. 44; according to vii. 78 an earthquake; cf. also liv. 31; lxix. 5) and on the following morning they lay dead in their houses. (...).

It was under the supervision of Abraham (pbAh) that Lot (pbAh) another exalted messenger of the Lord started preaching faith at Sodom and Gomorrah. He warned the people to desist from their sinful deeds. The people of the twin cities did not entertain Prophet Lot (pbAh). They arrogantly persisted to do the abominable acts and also threatened the life and honor of the prophet and his family. The Lord, therefore, destroyed them by raining burning sulfur on them.¹³

Ishmā'el (pbAh) the first born of Abraham (pbAh) was another exalted messenger of the Lord whom Abraham (pbAh) dedicated to the ancient house of the Lord at Makkah. He served as the first priest of the Lord at Ka'ba and preached there with a great success. Most of the Arabs stuck to the faith of Abraham (pbAh) for about twenty two centuries after Ishmā'el (pbAh) and up to about 250 years before the birth of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) at Makkah. 'Amr bin Luhayy¹⁴ an ancestor of Banū Khuzā'ah was perhaps the legendary founder of polytheism in Arabia who introduced idolatry at Ka'ba in Makkah. Since then, people started worshiping many Gods in addition to Allah, the God of Abraham (pbAh). In spite of all this, people from all parts of Arabia had been congregating at Makkah annually to perform Hajj and other rituals introduced by Abraham (pbAh) which included Tawāf of Ka'ba, Sa'y between Safā and Marwa hills and sacrifice on the 9th of Dhū al-Hajj at Makkah. Ultimately, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) revived and restored the true faith and traditions of Abraham (pbAh) by eliminating distortions from the same.

Abraham (pbAh) himself had been preaching faith in Canaan and Isaac (pbAh) succeeded him there. According to Genesis, Isaac (pbAh) lived only an inactive and passive life. His son Jacob (pbAh), too, had a troubled and unsettled time in Canaan. Since Joseph (pbAh) a

¹³ Gen Ch. 19.

¹⁴ *The Enc. of Islam* (Leiden; E. J. Brill Netherlands 1979), s. v. 'Amr b. Luhayy, 1:453.

son of Jacob (pbAh) had risen to the position of the Governor of Egypt, therefore, on his call, Jacob (pbAh) migrated to Egypt with all members of his family. The king of Egypt treated the family well during the life of Joseph (pbAh) but a considerable time after his death the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites and put them to forced labour from where they were rescued by Moses (pbAh) as stated earlier. Moses (pbAh) while leading the Israelites had always been reiterating the message of the Lord that:

I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves, worship no God but me¹⁵

He also stressed:

Israel, remember this! The LORD – and the LORD alone – is our God. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Never forget these commands that I am giving you today.¹⁶

According to Leviticus, 'The people of Israel are the LORD's slaves'¹⁷. They were also reminded that:

Never forget that you were slaves in Egypt; that is why I have given you this command.¹⁸

The Israelites, however, soon forgot their past and ignored their primary obligation to love and worship the Lord wholeheartedly. Instead of devoting themselves to the service of the Lord, the Israelites aspired more and more for land, wealth and power and to establish the kingdom and supremacy of the Israelites. Hence, God was not the first priority of the Israelites because they devoted more to the worldly gains of their community.

¹⁵ Exo 20:2-3; Deu 5:6-7.

¹⁶ Deu 6:4-6.

¹⁷ Lev 25:42 GNB.

¹⁸ Deu 24:22 GNB.

The Israelites knew full well that God was the Lord of the entire universe while all human beings were descendants of Adam (pbAh) and Eve. Unity and equality of entire human race must, therefore, be the guiding principal for peaceful co existence of humankind on earth. No one could claim any primacy over others either on the basis of his race, or blood relation with the Lord. The Qur'ān has dispelled the misconception of any sanctification based on the genealogies:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ¹⁹

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).²⁰

This shows that instead of honoring the people on the basis of the ethnic stock, the Lord honors only those who surrender before His will and behave righteously. Those who disobey the Lord or worship gods other than He are likely to be punished severely irrespective of the fact whether they be descendants of Abraham (pbAh) or any other person in the world. The pretension of the Israelites or the Christians that they were sons of God could not, therefore, be relied upon to save them. It has been revealed that:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَعْزُبُ
لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ²¹

¹⁹ Al-Qur'ān 49:13.

²⁰ Al-Qur'ān 49:13, tr. Allamah Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

²¹ Al-Qur'ān 5:18.

(Both) the Jews and the Christians say: 'We are sons of Allah, and his beloved.' Say: 'Why then doth He punish you for your sins? Nay, ye are but men,- of the men he hath created: He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and He punisheth whom He pleaseth: and to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between: and unto Him is the final goal (of all).'²²

It is said that cardinal virtues are seldom found in the oppressed classes. The Israelites had long been slaves in Egypt due to which they had lost much of the virtues of their ancestors. Due to a long history of moral corruption, disgust and despair, the Israelites had lost the vigor and hope to mould themselves into luminous characters and conduct of the sages like Abraham (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh) and Moses (pbAh). They, therefore, found it convenient to reconstruct the lives of their ancestors in such colors that matched the post-exilic characteristics of the Israelites.

Although the Israelites were chosen for the test and trial at their own turn and at a particular moment in the history of the world yet the Lord had bestowed His special favour on them. After rescuing them from Slavery in Egypt, He gave them the detailed law, the like of which had not been given to any other nation in the world. Thousands of the prophets were sent to them and they were given possession of the land blessed by the Lord. God says:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ الْكِتَآبَ وَالْحَكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ
وَآتَيْنَاهُم بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا إِلَّا مَن بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعِيًا بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ.²³

We did aforetime grant to the Children of Israel the Book the

²² Al-Qur'ān 5:18, tr A. A. Yusuf Ali.

²³ Al-Qur'ān 45:16-17.

Power of Command, and Prophethood; We gave them, for Sustenance, things good and pure; and We favoured them above the nations. And We granted them Clear Signs in affairs (of Religion): it was only after knowledge had been granted to them that they fell into schisms, through insolent envy among themselves. Verily thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment as to those matters in which they setup differences.²⁴

Glorification of the Lord was, therefore, the prime duty of the Israelites. Instead of glorifying the Almighty, however, they took pains to glorify the Israelites and started denouncing their rivals. To establish their superiority over others, they did not rely on moral rectitude or helping the oppressed. Blessings of the Lord through Abraham (pbAh) were denied to every other nation except the Israelites. Usurpation of land power and wealth from others was the motto of the Israelites as observed by the scholars:

Israel grows rich not from its productive capacities but from the wealth of others (...). Only the foreigners lose.

To acquire wealth means, of course, that one acquires honor and prestige, along with power. Indeed, in these narratives, wealth brings power (Abraham, David, Zion) and power brings wealth (Solomon). Abraham, David, Solomon, and Zion are presented as players in international politics; they are winners, generous and magnanimous, who acquire their wealth, whether through deception, banditry, treaties, and tribute, or pilgrim nations streaming to Zion with their gold, in an honorable manner. Their honor guarantees their status as patrons, who stand subordinate to no other power.²⁵

²⁴ Al-Qur'ān 45:16-17, tr. A. A. Yusuf Ali.

²⁵ *Ancient Israel: the Old Testament in its social context*, Ed. Philip Francis Esler (Canterbury: SCM Press, Great Britain, 2005), p. 110.

Shameful stories describing disgraceful sale-out of Sarah for riches or renouncement of Rebecca due to dread of death as ascribed to Abraham (pbAh)²⁶ and Isaac (pbAh)²⁷ received approbation of the Israelites as useful lessons to save one's skin or to increase the wealth of the Israelites. Subsequently, even Isaac (pbAh) was subjected to bitter criticism by the Israelites as well as the Christians because he had allegedly favored Esau over Jacob (pbAh), the ancestor of the Israelites.²⁸

In spite of bounteous blessings of the Lord, the masses of the Israelites proved to be obstinate and rebellious transgressors against the Lord. They broke the covenant of the Lord again and again as recorded in the OT. Besides their rebellious behavior, they also introduced corruptions in the text of the revelations as observed by Jeremiah²⁹ and other prophets of Israel. The Qur'ān also refers to the same in the following:

فَبِمَا نَفْسِهِمْ مِّيْتَابَهُمْ لَعَنَاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا دُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ.³⁰

But because of their breach of their covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard; they change the words from their (right) places and forget a good part of the message that was sent them, nor wilt thou cease to find them- barring a few -

²⁶ Gen 12:10-20 & 20:1-18.

²⁷ Gen 26:6-11.

²⁸ Instances of such criticism may be seen in Ch. 12 of this book titled: '*Characters in the Episode*'; section '*Isaac*'.

²⁹ It is recorded in Jer 8:8 (GNB):

How can you say that you are wise and that you know my laws? Look, the laws have been changed by dishonest scribes.

DRV (*Douay & Rheim Vulgate*, 1609) has translated the verse as:

How do you say: We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? Indeed the lying pens of the scribes hath wrought falsehood.

³⁰ Al-Qur'ān 5:13.

ever bent on (new) deceits: but forgive them, and over look (their misdeeds): for Allah loveth those who are kind.³¹

To reciprocate the blessings of the Lord, the Israelites were bound to abide by the covenant and also to persuade others towards the Lord by their own examples of righteousness. Instead of it, the scribes and the priests among them distorted the message to conform the same to the tastes and requirements of the Israelites. They developed an extremely restricted concept of God who was a tribal God of the Israelites. It was believed that the Lord had delivered them from Egypt only to live among his people.

Due to His likeness with man, God shared most of the shortcomings of the human beings. The Israelites, therefore, had no perpetual awareness about His presence everywhere. They had no vivid concept of life after death or accountability on the Day of Judgment. They, therefore, failed to develop God consciousness to live righteously. In the absence of any fear of Lord, the Israelites failed to develop higher motives of life. Acquisition of land, power and wealth had been the first priority of the Israelites. Being an ethnic community, they refused to share the bounteous blessings of God promised to all the nations in the world through Abraham (pbAh) as quoted below:

I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, But I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations.³²

God's assurance to bless all nations through Abraham (pbAh) had never been acceptable to the Israelites. They, therefore, tried

³¹ Al-Qur'ān 5:13, tr. A. A. Yusuf Ali.

³² Gen 12:2-3 GNB.

to exclude every other nation from the blessings. Canaanites being the strategic and religious rivals of the Israelites in Canaan had to be denounced as slaves and dispossessed from the Land. Lot (pbAh) was denied the prophethood and also blemished with incest only to declare Moabites and the Ammonites as illegitimate sons of Lot (pbAh) to usurp their lands. The Israelites did not spare the Moabites and the Ammonites in spite of the message of God conveyed to them by Moses (pbAh) as under:

The LORD said to me, 'Don't trouble the people of Moab, the descendants of Lot, or start a war against them. I have given them the city of Ar, and I am not going to give you any of their land.'³³

You will then be near the land of the Ammonites, the descendants of Lot. Don't trouble them or start a war against them, because I am not going to give you any of the land that I have given them.'³⁴

The Israelites in fact could not tolerate that any part of the land in or around Canaan, sanctifying grace or blessings of the Lord may go to anyone except their own community. Although God had repeatedly affirmed Ishmā'el (pbAh) as son of Abraham (pbAh)³⁵ yet the Israelites denied the same by stigmatizing him as son of slave woman and a cast out from the family. It was, however, an admitted fact that Ishmā'el (pbAh) was the first born of Abraham (pbAh) and his only son before the birth of Isaac. In spite of all this, the Israelites replaced Ishmā'el (pbAh) with Isaac (pbAh) in Gen 22:2 to transfer the sanctifying grace of sacrifice to him. According to the law of the Lord, however, only the first born belonged to the Lord. By presenting Isaac (pbAh) as the

³³ Deu 2:9 GNB.

³⁴ Deu 2:19 GNB.

³⁵ Gen 16:15, 17:23 & 25, 21:13.

victim of sacrifice and sole inheritor of Abraham (pbAh), they have openly rebelled against the law of God.

Esau the first born of Isaac (pbAh) was denied the rights of inheritance on the basis of a ridiculous story of the sale of birth right and also a curse of slavery on him from Isaac (pbAh). Edomites, the descendants of Esau were persecuted and denied their rights in spite of strict prohibition of the Lord. Moses (pbAh) had conveyed to them that:

He told me to give you the following instructions 'You are about to go through the hill country of Edom, the territory of your distant relatives, the descendants of Esau. They will be afraid of you, but you must not start a war with them, because I am not going to give you so much as a square foot of their land. I have given Edom to Esau's descendants.³⁶

Aside from many other instances, even Reuben³⁷, the first born of Jacob (pbAh) and Manasseh³⁸, the first born of Joseph (pbAh) were denied the divinely granted birth rights on one pretext or the other. We, therefore, observe that ever since Lot (pbAh) and Ishmā'el (pbAh), the Israelites had been opposing the will of God especially the law pertaining to the birthright of the firstborn. Victimization as well as usurpation of the rights of the firstborn by a younger brother has, therefore, been the norm in the History of the Israelites.

As trustees of the covenant, the Israelites were required to transmit the blessings of the Lord to all other nations in the world. As against it they chose to curse each and every nation around them. Instead of Calling other people to God, they turned to ethnic cleansing and elimination of all the contenders

³⁶ Deu 2:4-5 GNB.

³⁷ Gen 49:3-4.

³⁸ Gen 48:9-20.

for the land of Canaan. In addition to extensive genocide to rid the land from its native people, they also introduced such commandments in the OT that justified all atrocities committed by them. The Holy Book, therefore, was used to back the aspirations and visions of the Israelites.

The OT in its present form has become the guide book for the success of the strangers in the strange land. It has been observed that

The Bible can be read as, among many other things, a manual of survival for a nation of outsiders.³⁹

Certain observations of the scholars suggest the same:

The earliest Hebrew historians wrote probably in the ninth and eighth centuries, when some measure of stability came to the country. Their chronicles form the basis of what modern Biblical critics call the J and E documents. Later, after the eighth century, when the prophetic influence became more pronounced, a moral and religious tone crept into the stories. Under these Deuteronomistic writers the old traditions were retouched and expanded to teach lessons (...). The Bible can serve as a very useful historical document if it is kept in mind that its editors have recast tribal traditions and reinterpreted them from a national standpoint that the story is the idealized product of prophetic and priestly imagination, written down many centuries after the events supposedly occurred.⁴⁰

Another scholar writes that:

The Hebrew and Aramaic writings that are contained within the biblical corpus come from a wide area of space and time, and the unity that has been impressed upon them derives largely from the wishful thinking of the Jewish theologians of a comparatively late

³⁹ Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997), p. 93.

⁴⁰ Abram Leon Sachar, *A History of the Jews* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), p. 11, 12.

date. In fact, as recent research is showing ever more clearly, the myths and traditions of the Bible were very, very old long before they were ever collected or even written down in their present form, and stem in large measure from pre-Semitic strata of Near Eastern culture. The task of sifting fact from fancy, history from pious hero-worship, becomes increasingly difficult as the heterogeneous nature of biblical traditions becomes more evident.⁴¹

Jonathan Kirsch says that the earliest narrative in the B., were first written down sometime after 1000 BCE:

The earliest narrative in the Bible, or so goes the consensus of modern biblical scholarship, were first collected and written down sometime after 1000 B.C.E., during or shortly after the reign of David as king of the united monarchy of Judah and Israel. Much of the Bible was edited and revised during the reigns of the monarchs who descended from the House of David and succeeded him to the throne.⁴²

He further states that much (if not all) of the B. was compiled and reduced to writing in its present form some time in 600 B.C.E.

Modern biblical scholars generally assume that much (if not all) of the Bible was compiled and reduced to writing in its present form some time in 600 B.C.E. by editors (or 'redactors') who drew on sources and traditions of great antiquity, added glosses and even whole new passages of their own, and tacked on new books of more recent authorship.⁴³

According to the consensus of eminent scholars, the authorship of the major part of the Pentateuch can no longer be ascribed to Moses (pbAh). It is also said that

Genesis was probably edited by redactors working sometime after

⁴¹ John M. Allegro, *The Chosen People* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, St. Paul's House, Warwick Lane, 1971), 1st p. of 'Preface'.

⁴² J. Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, 1997, p. 259.

⁴³ J. Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, 1997, p. 43.

400 B.C.E.⁴⁴

The redactors, therefore, had before them the interests of the Israelites during the post-exilic period. Priority was attached to the art of getting power and wealth than promotion of higher moral or spiritual values in the community. The composers, therefore, did not teach the Israelites, to grow rich from their own productive capacities. They instead aimed at depriving or dislodging others from their lawful possessions. As such, curses and denigration of the rival nations in the OT aimed at asserting better proprietary rights of the Israelites as compared to their rivals. Assertions denouncing other nations may, therefore, be reviewed on merit in each case instead of accepting the same as infallible words of God. God has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ آذَوْا مُوسَىٰ فَبَرَّاهُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَجِيهًا.⁴⁵

O ye who believe! Be ye not like those who vexed and insulted Moses, but Allah cleared him of the (calumnies) they had uttered: and he was honourable in Allah's sight.⁴⁶

Let the Israelites and the Christian expositors of the Bible pause for a moment to think that they had wronged without any justification the exalted prophets of the Lord during 3000 years in the past. They had failed to reap any advantage from black propaganda against the elects of God like Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Ishmā'el (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh) and Jacob (pbAh) who were in reality the role models of moral rectitude of the highest order ever attained by man. To sift facts from the propagation, we need to evaluate critically the messages of hope for Israelites that predict destruction of their rivals. Our search, therefore, aims at bringing to light the true and

⁴⁴ J. Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, 1997, p. 126.

⁴⁵ Al-Qur'ān 33:69.

⁴⁶ Al-Qur'ān 33:69, tr. A. A. Yusuf Ali.

unsoiled figures of the patriarchs that had been tarnished only to serve the selfish interests of the Israelites.

Ch-1. Nations Cursed Due to Israel

The Israelites had remained enslaved under the Egyptians for about three or four centuries.⁴⁷ They also spent another 40 years after the Exodus as destitute wanderers in the desolate wilderness of Sinai. After their deliverance from Egypt, they were the only people in the world who were landless, homeless, and desperate having no refuge. During the life of Moses (pbAh), they defeated a few small nations in the region but did not have any foothold in Canaan prior to certain conquests under the leadership of Joshua. In between the death of Joshua and the kingship of Saul, they lived in a precarious condition for about

⁴⁷ The enslavement of the Israelites did not start from the first day of their entry in Egypt. In the beginning they enjoyed full citizenship and liberty, rather a privileged position for a very long time till the last Hyksos king ruled Egypt (c. 1550 BC). After that the 'New Kingdom' – 18th-20th Dynasties (Empire period, c. 1550-1070) came into power (see *Enc. Judaica* 6:223). Some time during this period the persecution and enslavement of the Israelites might have been gradually introduced and imposed. Moses (pbAh) died in c. 1180 BC; and Joshua started his campaigns in Canaan almost immediately after his death. *Oxford Bible Atlas* Third Edn, 1984, p. 16 states:

The oppression of Israel and the Exodus from Egypt took place most probably under Rameses II (1290-24), and Joshua's conquests are to be placed in the last quarter of the 13th century.

Although it is merely a credulously optimistic conjecture and is not based on some credible evidence, yet it might be taken into consideration while ascertaining the period of the oppression, persecution, and enslavement of the Israelites. Keeping in mind all the chronological data and the circumstances and trends of the time, it can be safely concluded that the age of oppression might well have spread over some centuries.

two centuries under the national leaders described as judges.⁴⁸ In response to the people's request, the Lord chose Saul as a King for the Israelites. It was King David (pbAh) who succeeded to conquer Jerusalem and most of the remaining territories in Palestine. David (pbAh) established the proper monarchy of the Israelites in Canaan. Solomon (pbAh), his son, succeeded him and besides consolidating the conquests of King David (pbAh), he constructed huge and magnificent buildings such as the temple of Jerusalem, the palaces, barracks, and stables for the cavalry.

Soon after the death of Solomon (pbAh), the kingdom was divided into 'Israel' consisting of the ten northern tribes and 'Judea' the southern kingdom of the remaining two tribes of Israel. There had been a lot of rivalry and animosity between the two kingdoms and they remained at daggers drawn until the fall of the capital city of Israel, Samaria, in the year 722 BC at the hands of the Assyrians. Here are some relevant excerpts from *McKenzie's DB*:

Shalmaneser [V, king of Assyria 727-722 BC] besieged the city for three years. He died shortly before the capitulation and was succeeded by Sargon [king of Assyria 722-705 BC], who received the surrender and ended the kingdom of Israel.⁴⁹

He [Sargon, who succeeded Shalmaneser V, while Samaria was under the siege] deported 27,290 Israelites ['resettling them at various places in the Empire, from Jozen to Media'⁵⁰] and settled the country with peoples from Mesopotamia.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Oxford Bible Atlas* Third Edn, 1984, p. 16 states:

The period of Judges began with the Iron Age, c.1200 BC, around the time of the Philistine invasion, and lasted until the beginning of the reign of Saul, c. 1025 BC.

⁴⁹ John L. McKenzie, *Dic of the Bible* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984), s.v. 'Shalmaneser', p. 795.

⁵⁰ *The Interpreter's Dic of the B.*, 4:185.

⁵¹ J. L. McKenzie, *Dic. of the Bible*, 1984, s.v. 'Sargon', p. 774.

The southern kingdom, too, was brought to an end by Nebuchadnezzar⁵² of Babylonia⁵³ in 587 B.C. He destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem, and razed its walls to ground. Col. Claude Reignier Conder explains:

(...), the ancient Temple of Solomon was destroyed, with the Palace and all the chief buildings of Jerusalem. The walls were broken down. (...), and the ark itself was probably removed, (...). Many of the chief men of Judah had followed Jehoiachin into captivity, and the rest now followed Zedekiah, leaving only the 'poor of the land as vinedressers and husbandmen' under a Babylonian ruler of Palestine (2 K 25:12).⁵⁴

⁵² *Chambers Biographical Dic* Updated Centenary Edn., 1999, p. 1353 explains:

Nebuchadnezzar (d. 562 BC: King of Babylon) succeeded his father Nabopolassar and founded the New Babylonian Empire. (...). He extended the Babylonian Empire as far as the Mediterranean, defeating the Egyptians at Carchemish (605 BC) and gaining control of Syria. He captured Jerusalem in 597 and [subsequently in] 586, when he destroyed the city and deported the Jews into exile in Babylonia.

⁵³ W. Smith, *A Dic of Bible.*, p. 71-72 writes:

Babel, Babylon (Greek form of Babel), is properly the capital city of the country which is called in Genesis *Shinar*, and in the later books *Chaldea*, or the land of the Chaldeans. (....). the city was situated on both sides of the river Euphrates, and the two parts were connected together by a stone bridge five stades (above hundred yards) long and 30 feet broad. At either extremity of the bridge was a royal palace, that in the eastern city being the more magnificent of the two. The two palaces were joined not only by the bridge, but by a tunnel under the river. The houses, which were frequently three or four stories high, were laid out in straight streets crossing each other at right angles. (....). On the fall of Nineveh, BC 625, Babylon became not only an independent kingdom, but an empire. The city was taken by surprise BC 539, as Jeremiah had prophesied, by Cyrus, (...). With the conquest of Cyrus commenced the decay of Babylon, which has since been a quarry from which all the tribes in the vicinity have derived the bricks with which they have built their cities. The 'Great City' has thus emphatically 'become heaps'.

⁵⁴ *A Dic. of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1903), s.v. 'Jerusalem', 2:587.

Bustani Oded writes:

In 588 the siege of Jerusalem began, and in the summer of 586 Nebuchadnezzar captured the city, laid the Temple waste, carried off a large part of the population of Judah into captivity, and put Zedekiah and other Judean nobles to death. The land of Judah was turned into a province.⁵⁵

After the conquest of Jerusalem in 587/86 BC, Nebuchadnezzar took away thousands of the Jews to Babylonia as captives. About half a century later the Babylonian Empire was put to an end by the Persian king Cyrus the Great⁵⁶ in 539 BC. McKenzie writes:

(...) in 538 BC Cyrus permitted the Jews residing in Babylon to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and its temple [through a decree whose text is quoted in Ezra 6:3-5].⁵⁷

After their return to Jerusalem, the Jews started to reconstruct the temple and the city walls. The Jews, naturally, developed an inferiority complex due to prolonged period of

⁵⁵ *Enc. Judaica 2nd Edn.*, ed. Fred Skolnik, etc. (NY etc: Thomson Gale, nd), s.v. 'Nebuchadnezzar' 15:49.

⁵⁶ *Chambers Biographical Dic.*, 1999, p. 478-79 explains:

Cyrus the Great (c.600-529 BC *Founder of the Persian Empire*): He was a cousin of Darius I. In c. 550 BC, he made Astyages, last King of Media, a prisoner, and took his capital, Ecbatana. By 548 BC he was king of Persia (Iran), and with the support of the tribes on 'the Lower Sea', or Persian Gulf, he took Sippara (Sipharvaim) and Babylon itself (539 BC). Cyrus, a polytheist [?], at once began a policy of religious conciliation, restoring enslaved nations, including the Jews, to their native countries, and granting them religious freedom. The empire of Lydia had fallen to Cyrus (c.546 BC), and by 539 BC he ruled Asia from the Mediterranean to the Hindu Kush. His friendliness towards the Phoenicians and Jews led to his being called, in the OT, the 'Shepherd' and the 'Anointed of Jehovah'. He extended his empire from the Arabian desert and the Persian Gulf in the south, to the Black Sea, the Caucasus and the Caspian in the north. He became the epitome of the heroic conqueror: brave, magnanimous and tolerant.

⁵⁷ John L. McKenzie, *Dic. of the Bible*, 1984, s.v. 'Cyrus', p. 167.

slavery and oppression suffered at the hands of other nations of the world. Consequently, during the post-exilic period, the sages of the Israelites had to make concerted efforts to dispel the deep-rooted feelings of inferiority by assuring the people about their greatness and their so-called glorious past. They, therefore, started fabricating various stories to proclaim their superiority over other nations around them. So they resorted to denouncing their rival nations by one way or the other.

Since the text of the Bible has undergone interpolations, additions, deletions, and alterations, because of the self-conceited assertions of greatness of the Israelites, therefore, we need to analyze its contents in a critical manner to arrive at the truth. For this, we need to refresh our memory with the events even prior to God's call to Abraham (pbAh) to leave Haran for Canaan. According to the Genesis, it was the father of Abraham (pbAh) who took the initiative to leave Ur for Haran:

And Terah took Abraham his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abraham's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.⁵⁸

It is further recorded that:

Now the LORD had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Gen 11:31 KJV.

⁵⁹ Gen 12:1-3 KJV.

a) Promise of the Land

In response to God's call Abraham (pbAh) left Haran and entered Canaan as noted below:

12:5 And Abraham took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abraham passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abraham, and said, *Unto thy seed will I give this land* [stress added].⁶⁰

It may be noted that the Lord Himself appeared unto Abraham (pbAh) and promised unto him and his progeny [seed], without any exception, the land of Canaan.

Abraham (pbAh), Lot and their families stayed for a few years in various parts of Canaan when a famine compelled them to go to Egypt. Some time after their return from Egypt, Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) separated from each other:

And the LORD said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: *For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever*⁶¹ [stress added]. And. I will make thy seed as the

⁶⁰ Gen 12:5-7 KJV.

⁶¹ Here, some very important points require a careful scrutiny:

- 1) 'and look from the place where thou art' is obviously Hebron, which is situated almost in the southern end of the holy land.
- 2) Its 'eastward' and 'southward' is stretched the land of Arabia.
- 3) It means that the land of Arabia was also granted to Abraham and his descendants.
- 4) History tells us that the land of Arabia was occupied by the descendants of Abraham from his wives other than Sarah.

dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.⁶²

Here again the Lord has promised unto Abraham (pbAh) and his seed, absolutely without any exception or specification, the land of Canaan. It may also be noted that this grant of land has been promised for ever.

Subsequently, God came unto Abraham (pbAh) in a vision and said:

Fear not Abraham, I am your shield, I will make your reward very great.⁶³

And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, *to give thee this land to inherit it* [stress added].⁶⁴

It transpires from the above that the Lord promised to give Abraham (pbAh) numerous descendants to possess the Land of Canaan which was shown to him. Yet, in spite of the repeated

5) It clearly means that the land of Arabia was also included in the lands promised to be given to Abraham, which naturally includes 'Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art: northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: *all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever*'.

6) Abraham's descendants from Hagar were the 'seed of Abraham' for all purposes in true sense of the word.

7) The 'seed of Abraham' from his wife Sarah had never happened to occupy the land of Arabia, whereas the 'seed of Abraham' from his wife Hagar had occupied the holy land for so many centuries.

8) The phrase 'for ever', categorically, excludes the Israelites from the literal and verbatim scope of the promise, because, not to say of 'for ever', they had been kept forcibly away from the land not only for centuries, but the millennia together.

9) As such the intent and content of the promise expose and falsify the claim of the Israelites as baseless and incredible.

⁶² Gen 13:14-16 KJV.

⁶³ Gen. 15:1 KJV.

⁶⁴ Gen 15:7 KJV.

assurances from the Lord, Abraham (pbAh) was perhaps reluctant to believe in the fulfillment of the promise, as stated in the Bible.⁶⁵ The lord, therefore, told him to bring a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a pigeon and a dove and to split each of them in two and place the halves opposite each other in two rows. Eventually, after the sun set a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch suddenly appeared and passed between the pieces of the animals that Abraham (pbAh) had cut them in half.

In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.⁶⁶

Obviously, the covenant was unilateral. It was God who bound himself to give the lands of the peoples mentioned above to the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) without any reciprocal liability or obligation on them. There was no binding on the Israelites either to worship the Lord or to obey all his commandments. There were no injunctions prohibiting worship of the false Gods or to refrain from the inequities. According to the covenant God unilaterally took on him to give to the seed of Abraham (pbAh) the lands of the nations enumerated above without any reciprocal, obligations on the Israelites.

This promise was naturally extendable to all the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) without any exception. The Israelites , however, did not tolerate rivals nor could they agree to share the blessings or possession of the land with others. Being ethno-centric people, the projection of the race and self-interest has

⁶⁵ 'And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it' (Gen 15:7 KJV).

⁶⁶ Gen. 15:18-21 KJV.

always been the foremost priority of the Israelites. Throughout their history, they continued to make conscious efforts to present themselves as the only chosen people of God. Besides this, they also tried to reserve all the blessings, honours and benefits only for the Israelites. They have been doing this to achieve their goals by concocting various baseless stories and commandments from the Lord to elevate the Israelites over others. They, therefore, denounced all their rivals in spite of the fact that most of them were genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh). All such descendants of Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), and Isaac (pbAh) were condemned by the Israelites with allegations of slavery, denial of their legitimacy and infliction of curse to deprive them of the rights of inheritance of various lands possessed by them.

The untruth in all such fabricated assertions comes to light due to the non-fulfillment of the prophecies concocted in the name of God or in the name of the patriarchs. In spite of the assertions as per Gen 13:15-16⁶⁷ and Gen 12:7⁶⁸ etc., Abraham (pbAh) could not acquire any land in Canaan during the whole of his life except the cave of Machpelah⁶⁹. When Sarai died,

⁶⁷ *For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it* [which was never factually handed over to him; according to the Bible. It means that God made a false promise with Abraham (pbAh)], *and to thy seed* ['to thy seed' is a general statement and applies to all the descendants of Abraham (pbAh), and not merely to the Israelites; which belies the claims of the Israelites] *for ever* ['for ever' is again a general statement and means: 'for all times and eternity'. The annals of history clearly reject this claim]. And. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

⁶⁸ And the LORD appeared unto Abraham, and said, *Unto thy seed* ['Unto thy seed' is a general statement and applies to all the descendants of Abraham (pbAh), and not merely to the Israelites; which belies the claims of the Israelites] *will I give this land* [stress added].

⁶⁹ *The Illustrated BD*, ed. Derek Wood *et al*, (IVP, 1980, 2:929) explains:

Machpelah is: 'the name applied to the field, cave and surrounding land

Abraham (pbAh) bowed several times before the Hittites and requested them humbly, as recorded in the Bible:

I am a stranger and a sojourner with you. Give me possession of a burying place with you so that I may bury my dead out of my sight.⁷⁰

It be noted here that the request was only for the purchase of a burial place for his wife Sarah, which was granted accordingly. It could by no means be taken as the possession of the land of Canaan. As a result of this Abraham (pbAh):

owned a small piece of land that had been promised to him by God. Abraham now had a toehold in Canaan.⁷¹

As to his descendents, they also failed to possess even a small part of Canaan till the first quarter of the twelfth century BC, i.e. about seven centuries after Abraham's emigration.⁷² This

purchased by Abraham as a burial place for his wife Sarah it was purchased from Ephron a Hittite, for 400 shekels of silver (Gn.23:8-16). It lay E of Mamre (v.17) in the district of Hebron. Here were later buried Abraham (Gn. 25:9), Isaac a Rebekah (Gn. 49:31) and Jacob (Gn. 50:13).'

⁷⁰ Gen 23:4 KJV.

⁷¹ Page Kelley, *Discovering Genesis* (NY: Guideposts Associates, Inc. Carmel, 1987), p. 175.

⁷² Up to now it is difficult to give exact dates of these events. More probably Abraham (pbAh) was born in the middle of the 20th century BC, his progeny migrated to Egypt in seventeenth or eighteenth century BC, Exodus took place in c. 1224 BC, Moses (pbAh) died in c. 1180 BC, his successor, Joshua, entered the land of Canaan almost in the same year, and the King and Prophet David (pbAh) conquered Jerusalem as a sign of the possession of the land of Canaan in the first quarter of the tenth century BC, which makes almost seven centuries after Abraham's emigration. *New Bible Atlas*, ed. D. R. W Wood, et al, (Leicester: IVP, 1985, p. 29)writes:

Opinions vary as to a precise dating for the patriarchal age. Many writers have concluded that the Middle Bronze Age fits in well with the details of the narratives, giving dates between c. 2000 BC and c. 1500 BC.

The New B D 2nd Edn, ed J. D. Douglas, et al, (Leicester: IVP, 1986, p. 188)

partial capture of land took place at the hands of Joshua, the successor of Moses (pbAh), started in the first quarter of the twelfth century BC. Almost complete and consolidated possession of the land of Canaan could be accomplished by King David (pbAh) when he conquered Jerusalem, almost in the middle of the tenth century BC.⁷³ As such, there seems to be no plausible reason to believe that Abraham (pbAh) was sent to

has observed about the older sources and methods of chronology:

Until about a century ago OT dates were calculated almost entirely from the biblical statements (so Ussher). Two difficulties beset this approach. (...). Hence schemes of this kind are subject to much uncertainty.

About the present method it observes:

Modern scholars try to correlate data culled both from the Bible and from archaeological sources, in order to obtain absolute dates for the Hebrews and for their neighbours. (....). good dates from c. 1200 BC back to c. 2100 BC can be obtained from Egyptian sources. These include king-lists, year-dates on cotemporary monuments, cross-checks with Mesopotamia and elsewhere, and a few astronomical phenomena dated exactly in certain reigns (ibid. p. 189). (....). The general results, bearing in mind the traditional figures for the lives, births and deaths of the Patriarchs, is to put Abraham at about 2000-1850, Isaac about 1900-1750, Jacob about 1800-1700 and Joseph about 1750-1650; these date are deliberately given as round figures to allow for any later adjustment. They suit the limited but suggestive archaeological evidence, as well as plausible interpretation of the biblical data (*The New B D 2nd Edn*, IVP, 1986, p. 190).

The Pharaoh of Exodus, Rameses II, reigned over Egypt during 1290-1224 BC (*Oxf. Bible Atlas*, 1984, p. 16). He died of drowning in the hot pursuit of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. After about four years' defying attitude of the Israelites God punished them with forty years wandering in the wilderness of Sinai. After forty four years of the Exodus, Moses (pbAh) died in c. 1180 BC. Immediately after Moses' death, his successor, Joshua, started his victories in Canaan.

⁷³ King and Prophet David's reign stretched over the period of 1005-965 BC (*Oxford Bible Atlas*, 3rd Edn., 1984, p. 18).

Peake's Com. On the B., ed. Matthew Black (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1962), p.71, in its article 'Chronology of the OT', by J. Gray, has given the period of David's reign as c. 1010-970 BC.

Canaan with the sole purpose of giving him possession of the entire land of Canaan as an everlasting possession because there had been no fulfillment of that promise for about 700 years after Abraham's going to Canaan. According to the Bible, God said to Abraham (pbAh):

for all the land which thou seest, *to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever* [stress added].⁷⁴

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God .⁷⁵

A perusal of the above study shows that:

- 1) According to the promises of God, originally '*all the land of Canaan*' was to be given in the '*perpetual possession*' of Abraham (pbAh).
- 2) Subsequently, it would pass to '*his seed without any exception*'.
- 3) It would remain a '*perpetual possession*' of '*his seed without any exception*', which means that none will ever be able to take it away from them.
- 4) '*I will be their God*', i.e. God Almighty will protect their everlasting possession over all the land of Canaan. He, the Almighty, would not allow any power to subjugate the Israelites or take the land away from them.
- 5) But the ground reality is that God did never commit any such promise, so, naturally, the question of its fulfillment or implementation does not arise in any case.

⁷⁴ Gen.13:15 and 17:8.

⁷⁵ Gen 17:8.

Subsequently, the Israelites constricted the promise to the descendants of Jacob (Israel) by excluding all other descendants of Abraham (pbAh). In spite of their exclusive claims, however, the fact is that:

For most of the Old Testament Period their occupation of it was only partial; for long periods they occupied it only as the vassals of foreign powers; and always their life was in varying degrees interpenetrated by other peoples.⁷⁶

The non-fulfillment of the so-called promise during the life of Jacob and many centuries thereafter suggests that the Israelites have fabricated the assertion only to prove their rights of possession from antiquity under divine authority since the time of Abraham (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh) and Jacob (pbAh). On the other hand, the fact is that: 'Abraham (pbAh) had gone to Canaan only to preach his faith there and he had no material ends in view'. The possession of Canaan by Israelites and the entire Middle East by the Ishmaelites were subsequent blessings from God Almighty to the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) as a reward for Abraham's selfless devotion to God and for his righteousness. Promise of land could not therefore be the attraction for Abraham (pbAh) to go to Canaan. He had gone there only for the cause of God, who amply blessed him in the shape of a great number of prophets as his descendants and also major parts of the world to be owned by his descendants and/or his followers in faith.

As regards the pretension that the seed of Abraham (pbAh) was to possess the land only through Isaac (pbAh)⁷⁷, it cannot be entertained due to its non-fulfillment till almost six hundred years after Isaac (pbAh). It was after the death of Moses (pbAh)

⁷⁶ G. W. Anderson, *The History and Religion Of Israel* (London: Oxf Univ. Press, 1966), p. 13.

⁷⁷ Gen 17:19, 21:12, 26:3.

and Aaron (pbAh) that the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua entered Canaan for the first time. The land was already occupied by different nations who were mentioned as 'the Canaanites' collectively. Canaan, the supposed common ancestor of the said nations, therefore, represents the primo-genitor of all people occupying the land of Canaan/Palestine. The Bible, however, enumerates the descendants of Canaan as under:

And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.⁷⁸

After the death of Abraham (pbAh), in the ancient times, Isaac (pbAh) succeeded him in Canaan. He led a colorless life during his early youth and even during his maturity while he remained blind and bedridden during the last 57 years of his life. Esau and Jacob (pbAh) succeeded him. Jacob (pbAh), the progenitor of Israel also did not lead an enviable, peaceful or a happy life. There was nothing to be proud of him. Consequent upon his cheating his elder brother, Esau, twice, he had to leave home and to live in exile with Laban his uncle at Haran. He served him for about fourteen years to marry his daughters i.e. Leah and Rachel. Thereafter, he had to serve Laban for another six years for a share in the flocks. It is said that Jacob (pbAh) fled from Laban during the latter's absence from home and without informing him. Chasing him, Laban caught up with him in the hill country of Jilead. There the Lord came to the rescue of Jacob (pbAh) and appeared to Laban to tell him not to threaten Jacob (pbAh) in any way. After release from Laban and while

⁷⁸ Gen. 10:15-19 KJV.

entering Canaan, Jacob (pbAh) was terribly afraid of Esau, his brother who happened to be a powerful chieftain in the region. While meeting Esau, Jacob (pbAh) therefore, presented himself humbly as a slave of Esau and succeeded to seek the pleasure and pardon of Esau by using flattering words in praise of Esau.

After returning from Haran, Jacob (pbAh) and his family sojourned for sometime near Schechem in Canaan. There, Dinah, the daughter of Jacob (pbAh), met a sad incident of rape by Schechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite. As a revenge to the said incident, Simeon and Levi, two sons of Jacob (pbAh) killed all the people of Schechem through the deceitful device of circumcision. The Bible records this event in the following words:

And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. (...). And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. (...), saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. (...). *And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully* [stress added], and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that *were* a reproach unto us: But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we *be*, that every male of you be circumcised; Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone. And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he *was* more honourable than all the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the

gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, These men *are* peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, *it is* large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they *are* circumcised. (...). And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city. And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword⁷⁹, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which *was* in the city, and that which *was* in the field, And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that *was* in the house. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I *being* few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.⁸⁰

Subsequently Jacob (pbAh) and his family left Schechem and went to Bethel.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the sons of Jacob (pbAh) continued to graze their flocks in various regions of Canaan where they could never enjoy a breath of peace and prosperity till their emigration to Egypt. Except for their cattle and tents, they had no other possessions in Canaan; no land even to pitch their

⁷⁹ How is it possible that these two men slew the whole population of the city! It is obviously a blatant lie.

⁸⁰ Gen. 34:1-3, 6, 8, 13-22, 24-30 KJV.

⁸¹ Gen.35:5-7.

tents. The trouble of the family culminated in the famine due to which Jacob (Israel) had to shift to Egypt along with all the members of his family during the period when Joseph (pbAh), his son had risen to the office of a minister of the said land. The total number of the family of Jacob (pbAh), which settled in Egypt, was, by all means, less than a hundred, as stated by the Bible:

All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls *were* threescore and six;⁸²

Pharaoh treated them well and gave to the Israelites the fertile pasture lands in the area of Goshen where they had a good period of respite to live peacefully and to graze their cattle on the said land.

The Israelites prospered in Egypt for a considerable period as the Bible notes:

And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.⁸³

Obviously, it may have taken the Israelites some centuries to achieve the position mentioned in the above verse (*and the land was filled with them*). Then, after a pretty long time, the tables turned against the Israelites as the Bible has recorded:

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and *so* get them up out of the

⁸² Gen 46:26 KJV.

⁸³ Ex. 1:7 KJV.

land.⁸⁴

As such, the Israelites had their period of slavery extended to almost 2-3 centuries in Egypt. The Bible relates it as:

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.⁸⁵

The Israelites, therefore, remained under slavery of the Egyptians for a long time, crying out for help from the Lord. They were groaning under the trouble and torture by the salve-drivers as well as other hardships inflicted by the Egyptians on them. Eventually, the Lord heard their cry and turned to them compassionately and sent Moses (pbAh) to deliver them from the yoke of the Egyptians.

And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Ex. 1:8-10 KJV.

⁸⁵ Ex. 1:11-14 KJV.

⁸⁶ Ex. 3:7-10 KJV.

b) Moses (pbAh) Sent to Egypt to Rescue Israel

Moses (pbAh) assisted by Aaron (pbAh), his brother went to the king of Egypt with the message from the Lord to worship no one except the Lord God of the universe. On repeated refusal of the King to accept faith, Moses (pbAh) and Aaron (pbAh) started demanding the release of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. Ultimately, after prolonged struggle and bitter contention with the King and the People of Egypt, Moses (pbAh) succeeded to get the Israelites released from the slavery and started to lead them towards the land promised by the Lord. The Israelites, however, proved to be stubborn people and they disobeyed the commandments of the Lord and also rebelled against Moses (pbAh) continually. Consequently, as a punishment from the Lord, they had to spend 40 years as destitute wanderers in the wilderness of Sinai. All the people above 20 years among the said generation died during the wandering. It was, therefore, a new generation of the Israelites, nourished in the free atmosphere of Sinai without having any yoke of bondage on their necks, who, under the leadership of Moses (pbAh), had some initial victories such as against the Amalekites, the Midianites, the Ammonites and other people of the east of Jordan. Before entering the land of Canaan, however, both Aaron (pbAh) and Moses (pbAh) died in the land of Moab. Till the death of Moses (pbAh) in Moab, the Israelites were homeless and landless outsiders fighting against the native population of Canaan to dispossess them and to grab the land as primary foot-hold for the nation. Subsequently, under the leadership of Joshua, the Israelites continued to invade different cities in Canaan and succeeded in destroying many strongholds of the Canaanites.

It was, therefore, under the leadership of Joshua that the Israelites defeated the people of Jericho, Ai and Amorites and

some other low-lying parts of Canaan. Meanwhile, substantial parts of Canaan including Jerusalem remained in the possession of the Canaanites and they continued to live side by side with the Israelites. After the death of Joshua, there had been a continual war of the Israelites with one nation or the other for about two hundred years till the conquests of David (pbAh) who succeeded to establish a monarchy of the Israelites in Canaan/Palestine. To cope with the situation, the Israelites had to improve their military power on the one hand while on the other, they had to propagate their superior moral as well as legal rights on the lands in the region. *As such, all the nations who had any rivalry or confrontation with Israel were condemned or disqualified from claiming any parity with Israel or a priority of rights against them.* It was, therefore, found expedient to disqualify all the nations in the region either through a direct commandment from the Lord or by invoking a curse from the patriarchs such as Noah (pbAh) and Isaac (pbAh) or alternatively through the oracles of Balaam⁸⁷, the son of Beor. On careful examination of the background, the history of Israel and the narrative of the events in the Bible, we are led to believe that most of such commandments and curses were neither the genuine word of God nor the words of the Patriarchs mentioned in the book of Genesis of the Bible. On careful scrutiny, such curses or commandments can be detected as mere fabrication on the part of the Israelites.

⁸⁷ Harper's BD, Bangalore, 1990, p.90 writes:

Balaam, a non-Israelite prophet known from both Biblical and extrabiblical sources a person from Transjordan skilled not only in divination but also in performative acts. (...). Balaam appears commonly in the OT and regularly in the NT as an example of an evil artist, a prophet who would sell his skill for the proper price.

The history of Israel shows that they had confrontation with many people such as the Amalekites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Midianites, the Ammonites and various other nations who had been referred under the collective name of the Canaanites denoting that they were the descendants of Canaan.

The Canaanites continued to resist the invasions of the Israelites, yet they had to succumb to the same at various places. Attacks and counter-attacks, however, continued for almost more than one and a half century. This was, perhaps, the time when aside from their military might, the Israelites felt the need of a moral booster in the shape of the promise of God with Abraham (pbAh) regarding the grant of the land of Canaan for the Israelites.⁸⁸ To foil further resistance of the Canaanites, the Israelites devised a policy to demoralize the Canaanites with the propaganda that they were cursed by Noah (pbAh) to be the slaves of Israel due to which it was useless for them to fight against the will of God. Hence, the fabrication of the curse from Noah with its desired effect, the Canaanites were doomed to be the slaves of Israel. All this false propagation was aimed at convincing their opponents that they had no legal or moral rights to possess the said land.

c) Fabricated Commandments to Justify Atrocities and Immoralities

Besides this, many other insertions were made in the book of Genesis used as a stratagem to justify various immoralities as well as atrocities of the Israelites against the people subdued by them. Such insertions pretend that God had commanded the Israelites to kill each and every soul of their enemies on earth and to put their cities on fire after usurpation of all their land,

⁸⁸ Gen. 12:7, 15:7.

wealth, sheep, cattle and any thing else that was useful to Israel. No compassion had to be shown towards the oppressed. No wonder that we find special commandments from the Lord for total extinction of the enemies of the Israelites including men, women and the infants.

The books of OT such as Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, etc testify to the fact that the nations mentioned above put strong resistance against the onslaught of the Israelites with full force. Even after their initial defeats by the Israelites, they, in collaboration with other nations in the region, continued to arrange counter-attacks against the Israelites to repossess the land. All these nations, therefore, continued to resist and repel the Israelites for many centuries even after their subjugation in various parts of Canaan. Details of their attacks and counter-attacks by Israel are well recorded in the OT. It was during the said period of trouble and turmoil that besides enhancing their military force, the Israelites also tried to demoralize the Canaanites, the Midianites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites and other nations by an effective propaganda pretending that the Israelites were divinely destined heirs to the said lands on the basis of God's promise to Abraham (pbAh) and his descendants. Other nations were either illegitimate descendants of the Patriarchs or they were cursed to serve as slaves before the Israelites. As such, the Israelites posed themselves to be the only lawful and genuine inheritors of Abraham (pbAh) whom God had promised the land of Canaan. The original settlers, i.e. the Canaanites stood accursed by Noah (pbAh) to be the slaves of the Semites represented by the Israelites. This strategy aimed at debarring all other nations in or around Canaan from claiming any parity of rights with the Israelites.

For about three hundred years since the Exodus, the Israelites had a continual confrontation with other nations in Canaan during which they subjugated many people around them while other nations plundered or conquered many of the cities of the Israelites. Curses from Noah (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh) or Balaam Beor, were, therefore, directed only to denounce the opponents of Israel. The Israelites did not spare any nation around them and tried to humiliate or curse those who had any rivalry or animosity with them. Hence, most of the curses reflect only the hostility of the Israelites than any reality or truth in them. A brief introduction of the nations cursed by the Israelites is given below, while a detailed analysis of the baseless charges levelled by the Israelites against those nations will be afforded later.

d) The Amalekites

Dr. J. A. Thompson explains:

Amalek was the son of Eliphaz and the grandson of Esau (Gen 36:12,16). The name is used as a collective noun for his descendants, Amalekites. (...). Israel first met the Amalekites at Rephidim in the wilderness of Sinai. Because of this attack, the Amalekites came under a permanent ban and were to be destroyed. (...). David fought the Amalekites in the area of Ziklag (...) in Hezekiah's day the sons of Simeon attacked 'the remnant of the Amalekites that had escaped', taking their stronghold in Mt. Seir.⁸⁹

The Amalekites were, perhaps, the first nation to attack the Israelites for intruding into their lands during the Exodus. The Israelites, therefore, denounced them by invoking a curse from

⁸⁹ *New BD 2nd Edn*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Leicester: NIV, 1982), p. 21.

the Lord and also through Balaam son of Beor⁹⁰, predicting total extinction of the said people.

And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations; but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever. ⁹¹

e) The Midianites

During the post Exodus period, the Midianites were found inhabiting desert borders in Trans-Jordan from Moab down past Edom. They consisted of five families linked to Abraham (pbAh) through Midian, the son of Abraham (pbAh) from his wife Keturah. Due to their enmity against Israel, they, too, were doomed to be vanquished through direct commandment from the Lord:

The LORD commanded Moses, 'Attack the Midianites and destroy them, because of the evil they did to you when they deceived you at Peor,'⁹²

f) The Canaanites

Since most of the nations stated in Gen. 15:18-21 were supposed to be the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, therefore, the Israelites invented a curse of slavery upon the Canaanites from Noah to disqualify those nations from claiming any rights of ownership or possession of the said lands. The curse was directed to making the Canaanites slaves of Semites (represented by Israel) and also of the Japhethites,⁹³ i.e. the Philistines, the

⁹⁰ A non-Israelite prophet selling out curses for monetary benefits.

⁹¹ Nu 24:20 KJV.

⁹² Nu 25:16-18 GNB; 31.

⁹³ Japheth was one of the three sons of Noah. The descendants of Japheth

Persians, Greeks and Romans.⁹⁴ The main purpose of the curse was to propagate that the Canaanites were doomed to be the slaves of Israel. Hence, it was useless for them to fight against the will of God by putting any resistance against the invasion of the Israelites.

The theme is further discussed in the next chapter.

g) The Moabites and the Ammonites

At the time of the Exodus, the Moabites and the Ammonites were holding the entire land of Moab. They dwelt to the east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. According to the Bible, both the Moabites and the Ammonites were the descendants of Lot (pbAh). The Bible has recorded it as follows:

And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. (...). Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.⁹⁵

occupied the 'Isles of the Gentiles' (Gen 10:5), i.e. the coast lands of the Mediterranean Sea in Europe and Asia Minor (W. Smith, *A DB.*, p. 278). He was the ancestor of a number of tribes and peoples. Noah (pbAh), in his prophetic declaration, prayed that God might enlarge Japheth and that he might have Canaan as a servant (Gen 9:27).

⁹⁴ Gen 9:25-28.

⁹⁵ Gen 19:30-32; 36-38.

During the Exodus, the Israelites were forbidden to dispossess them from the lands granted to them by the Lord. The Bible asserts:

And *when* thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon *any* possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot *for* a possession.⁹⁶

It may, however, be noted that in spite of God's injunction, the Israelites did not spare them and in addition to the armed attacks, they condemned them as illegitimate sons of Lot (pbAh) through self-concocted allegations of incest of Lot (pbAh) with his daughters.⁹⁷ This was done with a malicious purpose to dissuade the Moabites and the Ammonites from claiming any parity with the Israelites or to assert any legal or moral rights over the lands which the Israelites desired to possess.

The topic has been discussed independently elsewhere in the book.

h) The Edomites

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the son of Isaac (pbAh) who were holding the entire land of Edom at the time of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. To disqualify them, the Israelites managed to deprive Esau of the blessings of his father Isaac (pbAh), as recorded in the Bible:

Isaac answered, 'I have already made him master over you, and I have made all his relatives his slaves. I have given him grain and wine. Now there is nothing that I can do for you, my son!'

⁹⁶ Deu 2:19.

⁹⁷ Gen 19:31-38.

(...).Then Isaac said to him, 'No dew from heaven for you, No fertile fields for you. You will live by your sword, But be your brother's slave. Yet when you rebel, You will break away from his control.'⁹⁸

The said curse, however, proved to be an irony and had a reverse impact during the actual life of Jacob (pbAh) and Esau. Jacob (pbAh) had to flee from home due to fear of Esau. Subsequently, he had to pose himself as a humble servant or slave of Esau, as recorded in the Bible:

Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the country of Edom. He instructed them to say: 'I, Jacob, your obedient servant, report to my master Esau that I have been staying with Laban and that I have delayed my return until now. I own cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and slaves. I am sending you word, sir, in the hope of gaining your favor.'⁹⁹

This shows that the curse was not from Isaac (pbAh) but a wishful fabrication of the Israelites which seems to have been invented some time after David's invasion of the land of the Edomites during the early tenth century B.C. It clearly shows that this was another conscious fabrication of the Israelites to establish their superiority over the Edomites i.e. the descendants of Esau.

A fairly detailed study of the theme has been made in the coming pages of this book.

i) The Ishmaelites

The Ishmaelites factually formed the major part of the descendents of Abraham (pbAh) and their twelve tribes under their chieftains enjoyed sovereignty over vast regions throughout the

⁹⁸ Gen 27:37, 39, 40 GNB.

⁹⁹ Gen 32:3-5 KJV.

Arabian Peninsula. Although the other tribes of the Ishmaelites were living far away from the Israelites, yet the Nabateans and Kedar, the descendents of the two eldest sons of Ishmael formed a semicircle on the entire South-West, East and Southern side of Canaan and continued to be formidable opponents of the Israelites from the time of Exodus to the ultimate expulsion of the Israelites from Canaan in about 130 AD. To denounce them, therefore, the Israelites had to invent the story of slavery of Hagar, the mother of Ishmael (pbAh) to pretend that the Ishmaelites were the children of a slave girl and hence, were born in slavery. This unfounded allegation was designed only to serve as a moral booster for Israel as a relief from their inferiority complex and low spirits lurking in the sub-conscience of the Israelites due to their prolonged period of slavery in Egypt.¹⁰⁰

As against the continual precarious position of the Israelites, they have often been attempting to preclude others from being descendants of Abraham (pbAh) by false allegations against the genuine descendants and inheritors of the blessings and the promises of the Lord with Abraham (pbAh). Such false insertions in the Holy book, however, failed to force the hand of the Lord to fulfill the desires of the Israelites. Human History and the work of God, therefore, provide ample evidence to the fact that the Israelites had inserted their own words in the text which stood exposed as spurious due to their non-fulfillment. Consequently, the Israelites became accursed from the lord who continued to punish them again and again through the ages.

¹⁰⁰ Please see our book '*Hagar the Princess, the Mother of the Arabs, and Ishmael the Father of 12 Princes*' available from the author of this book. Royal background, piety, and nobility of Hagar and princely status of Ishmael have been established in it on the basis of historical and biblical evidence.

j) Other Small Nations around Israel

The Israelites take pride in their pretensions that they are the only legitimate descendants of Abraham (pbAh), whom God had assured that:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.¹⁰¹

This shows that Abraham (pbAh) was blessed by the Lord abundantly and all the nations of the world had to be blessed through him and his descendants. The Israelites, however, pretended to be the only genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh). To preclude others from sharing blessings and the land, the Israelites targeted mainly their close ancestors. Descendants of Lot (pbAh), i.e. the Moabites and the Ammonites were declared illegitimate by alleging incest to Lot (pbAh) with his daughters. The Ishmaelites were declared sons of slave girl by alleging slavery to Hagar, the mother of Ishmael (pbAh). The renowned Jewish historian and philosopher, Philo¹⁰² and others termed him as an illegitimate son of Abraham (pbAh). Aside from this, Ishmael (pbAh) was also declared Pariah knowing full well that he was separated from the family to stand at the house of the Lord at Makkah as first priest of the Lord anywhere on earth. Against explicit certification of the Bible that God was

¹⁰¹ Gen 12:2, 3 KJV.

¹⁰² Philo Judaeus (c. 20 BC-c. 40 AD) was born in Alexandria, Egypt, where he was a leading member of Jewish community. A prolific author, his work brought together Greek philosophy and Jewish scripture, and greatly influenced subsequent Christian theologians like Clement and Origen. Most of his works consist of commentaries on Pentateuch (*Chambers Biog. Dic*, ed. Milanie Parry, 1997, p.1462).

with him when he grew up,¹⁰³ the Israelites refute the same by calling him an outcast.

Esau, the first born of Isaac (pbAh) and even a twin brother of Jacob (pbAh) was dubbed by the expositors as progeny of the serpent. In spite of the fact that Esau always enjoyed superiority over Jacob (pbAh) the Israelites denigrated him by alleging slavery based on a curse concocted in the name of Isaac (pbAh). Hence instead of being trustees of the covenant and the vassal to transfuse blessings of the Lord through Abraham (pbAh) to all the people in the world, they became the source of curse for them. Eventually, due to their pride, arrogance and rebellion against the Lord and his prophets, the Israelites stood accursed by the Lord and also by the prophets of Israel.

¹⁰³ Gen 21:20.

Ch-2. CURSE OF NOAH (pbAh) on Canaan

Our study of the book of 'Genesis' reveals that Canaan was the first person to be cursed after Cain. Allegedly it was Noah (pbAh) who cursed his grandson Canaan some time after the deluge. The story runs as follows:

And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan¹⁰⁴; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.¹⁰⁵ And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and

¹⁰⁴ *The Interpreter's Dic of the Bible*, ed George Arthur Buttrick, *et al* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2000, 3:555) has recorded very important observations on these verses:

The offender in vs. 24 is the youngest son of Noah, who is named in vs. 25 Canaan (not Ham) and whose brothers are Shem and Japheth. The attribution of the evil deed to "Ham, the father of Canaan" (vs. 18b), is more than likely an attempt to harmonize the two accounts, to help bridge the hiatus [means 'gap in a series'] between vs. 18 and vs. 20. Two chronologies apparently have been harmonized, one which gives Noah's sons as Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and one which lists them as Shem, Japheth, and Canaan.

¹⁰⁵ *A Dic of the B*, ed James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1904, 1:347) has made the following important observation:

In consequence of Ham's conduct towards Noah when drunken, Canaan was cursed, and it was prophesied that he should be the servant of his

Canaan shall be his servant.¹⁰⁶ God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.¹⁰⁷

The New American Bible renders verses 25-27 as:

Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of all slaves shall he be to his brothers.

He also said:

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem! Let Canaan be his slave. May God expand Japheth, so that he dwells among the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave.¹⁰⁸

The Chumash translates these verses:

The sons of Noah who came out of the Ark were *Shem, Ham, and Japheth* – *Ham being the father of Canaan*¹⁰⁹ [stress added]. These

brethren, Shem and Japheth (Gen 9:22-27), the passage, however, does not agree very well with the context, as the wrong to Noah had been committed by Ham, and not by Canaan, and it has therefore been supposed that it has been taken from an ancient poem.

¹⁰⁶ *The Interpreter's Dic of the B*, 2:494 has observed as follows:

However, in Gen 9:24-27 Canaan himself appears to be the 'youngest son' of Noah and the brother of Shem and Japheth.

¹⁰⁷ Gen. 9:20-27 KJV.

¹⁰⁸ Gen 9:25-28 NAB, *The New Catholic Translation* (Philippine B. Society, 1991).

¹⁰⁹ It be noted that the sons of Noah (pbAh), who came out of the Ark, were *Shem, Ham, and Japheth*. 'Canaan' was not among those who came out of the Ark. It has been only parenthetically observed about Ham that he was '*the father of Canaan*'. Hashem had said to Noah (pbAh), 'Come to the Ark, you and all your household, (Gen 7:1 *Chumash*)'. His son's son, Canaan, was not among his household who came to the Ark. It is also confirmed from v 6-7 which reads:

Noah was six hundred years old when the Flood was water upon the earth. Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him, went into the Ark because of the waters of the Flood.

No son's son has been mentioned here, whereas the 'son's wives' have categorically and unequivocally been mentioned. The persons, who came out

three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole world was spread out. (...). *Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness* [stress added] and told his two brothers outside. (...). Noah awoke from his wine and *realized what his small son had done to him* [stress added]. And he said, '*Cursed is Canaan*';¹¹⁰ *a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers* [stress added]. And he said, 'Blessed is HASHEM, the God of Shem; and *let Canaan be a slave to them* [stress added]. 'May God extend Japheth, but he will dwell in the tents of Shem; *may Canaan be a slave to them* [stress added]'.¹¹¹

Canaan has been attributed as 'slave of slaves' and 'slave of Shem and Japheth'. Since, the Israelites had themselves been the slaves in Egypt, therefore, '*Slave of slaves*' would mean the '*slavery of the Canaanites under the Israelites*' who themselves had been the fugitive slaves from Egypt. There is no ample evidence to conclude that the story of naked Noah (pbAh) and the curse on Canaan can be the genuine word of God. Gen 9:20-27

of the Ark, have also been mentioned in Gen 8:16 (*Chumash*) as below:

Go forth from the Ark; you and your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you.

It is thus quite clear that no Noah's son's son (Canaan) was among the persons: (1) whom Noah (pbAh) was ordered to take in the Ark; and (2) whom Noah (pbAh) physically took in the Ark; (3) and who went forth from the Ark.

¹¹⁰ It was '*Ham, the father of Canaan, [who] saw his father's nakedness*'; but '*Cursed is Canaan*'. *Chumash* (p. 44-45) has inserted a crafty justification to this unjust act in its footnote to Gen 9:25:

Ham sinned and Canaan is cursed! R' Yehudah explains that God had already blessed Noah and his sons, and there cannot be a curse where a blessing had been given. Therefore Noah cursed his grandson, who, as noted above, was deeply involved in humiliating incident. (...). Noah foresaw that Canaan's descendants would always be wicked and morally degraded; thus we find the Patriarchs scrupulously avoiding marriage with the accursed Canaanites (Radak).

¹¹¹ *The Chumash, Stone Edition*, ed Rabbi Nosson Scherman (NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd, 2007), p. 43f (Gen 9:18,19,22,24-27).

can easily be identified as a spurious addition in the text consciously fabricated to serve the interest of Israel. We shall therefore attempt to examine the relevant text along with the historical background of the Israelites to ascertain the validity of the curse keeping in view the purpose it serves.

It had been pointed out earlier that only a small part of the OT consists of the true message and guidance from the Lord. By far the major part of the OT in its present form consists of national history, traditions and literature of Israel. It is therefore incorrect to presume that every writing in the said collection of books is the Word of God. Factually each book has its own writer/redactor or writers/redactors who composed them through blending historical records, legends, myths, oral law and traditions of Israel. Similarly each of the writings had its own background while the redactors had some specific purpose to write them. As regards the slavery of Canaan a careful perusal of Chapters 8 and 9 of the Genesis reveals that there is an irrelevant reference to Canaan who might not have even been born till that time. This uncalled for mention of Canaan smells of some vileness in it. To ascertain the same we need to trace the background of drunken Noah leading to the curse on Canaan.

Referring to the end of the deluge the Genesis records that by 27th day of the second month, the earth was completely dry.

And God spake unto Noah, saying: Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.¹¹²

It can be appreciated that no 'son's son' has been mentioned here. It can thus be assumed that Noah's sons had not begotten any children until then. It is further disclosed that:

¹¹² Gen. 8:15-16 KJV.

God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.¹¹³

Here again no sons' sons have been mentioned. God blessed only Noah (pbAh) and his sons and gave them the law and made a covenant with them including all living beings as recorded in Gen 9:2-17.

The very next verse reads:

And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan.¹¹⁴

That '*Ham is the father of Canaan*' has been shown in brackets by The *Good News Bible* and some other versions of the Bible to signify that it is a later addition in the text. It is, however, noted with surprise that after introducing Ham in the usual manner as *the son of Noah* he has again been highlighted as *father of Canaan*. This looks awkward especially due to the fact that Ham was being identified with reference to his youngest son Canaan who had not even been born till that time. It is further astonishing that Ham has been shown only as *father of Canaan* omitting three eldest sons of Ham i.e. *Cush, Egypt, Libya*. The identification of Ham as father of Canaan has therefore an ulterior motive in it.

Again, verse 22 of the same chapter starts with the words 'when Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked.' This double stress on Canaan is not therefore without some special significance or a purpose behind it. This purpose, however, can be ascertained by studying the history of Israel from the time Abraham (pbAh) entered Canaan extending to the post-Exodus period when the homeless people of Israel were fighting against the Canaanites to possess the lands of Canaan

¹¹³ Gen. 9:1 KJV.

¹¹⁴ Gen. 9:18 KJV.

as a foothold for their nation. Since the dispossession of the Canaanites was the main object of Israel, therefore it was necessary for them to deny the moral as well as legal rights of the Canaanites on the said land. It was perhaps during this period that in addition to their conquests with the military might, the Israelites also devised the policy to assert and propagate slavery of the Canaanites. To authenticate the curse with retrospective effect, therefore, they invoked it from Noah (pbAh), the progenitor of all nations, including the Canaanites, the Israelites, and others.

a) A Strange Mention of the Canaanites

The same expediency of the Israelites led them to pretend that the land of Canaan belonged to the descendants of Abraham (pbAh), i.e. to the Israelites w.e.f the time Abraham (pbAh) entered Canaan. Consequently we find the said promise inserted in the Bible. To reassure the Israelites about the validity of the said promise and also to demoralize the Canaanites the so-called promise was given a wider publication by repeating of the assurance to Abraham (pbAh), to Isaac (pbAh) and to Jacob (pbAh) successively.

The first mention of the Canaanites is as follows:

And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Schechem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.¹¹⁵

Apparently the mention of the presence of the Canaanites in the land at the time when Abraham (pbAh) entered Canaan seems to be redundant. The words '*the Canaanite was then in the Land*' are, therefore, irrelevant in the context, and are the

¹¹⁵ Gen 12:6 KJV.

interpolation of a later period, i.e. when the Canaanite was not in the Land. This means that the said insertion was the handiwork of the Israelites pertaining to the period when they had already dispossessed the Canaanites from major parts of the land. Obviously the necessity to mention the Canaanites arose only when the Canaanites continued to arrange counter-attacks to repossess the land besides putting strong resistance against the Israelites. Curse from Noah (pbAh) was therefore a stratagem to demoralize the Canaanites, whereas the promise of the land with Abraham (pbAh) served as a moral booster to revive the low spirits of Israel caused by long lasting slavery in Egypt and miseries suffered during their wanderings in the desert. The promise of land and the curse on Canaan may therefore be a product of the necessity arising during the post-Exodus period but the Israelites gave it a retrospective effect by ascribing the curse to Noah (pbAh) and the promise of the Land to Abraham (pbAh). Since other nations had no access to the Holy Book, therefore the said insertions had gone unchallenged ever since they were thrust into the Genesis. In due course, such spurious writings became a part of the creed of the Israelites to be inherited, subsequently, by the Christians.

Enc of Catholicism has observed:

Thomas Hobbes¹¹⁶ became obsessed with questions of authorship.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). He was educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford (1603-08). He was acquainted to many leading intellectual figures of his day: Francis Bacon, John Seldon and Ben Jonson in England, Galileo in Florence, and the circle of Marin Mersenne in Paris, including Rene Descartes, etc. His masterpiece was *Leviathan* (1651), which presented and connected his mature thoughts on metaphysics, psychology and political philosophy. He was a thorough-going materialist, seeing the world as a mechanical system consisting wholly of bodies in motion, driven by forces of attraction and repulsion. The *Leviathan* offended the royal exiles in Paris and the French Govt. by its hostility to church power and religious obedience. He wrote on

In *Leviathan*, his book on the theory of the state, he determined from Gen. 12:6, a reference to 'Canaanite in the land', and Deu 34:6-12, an account of Moses' burial, that *Moses could not have written the Torah and that it was thus written by a later hand*.¹¹⁷

With reference to Spinoza¹¹⁸ it observes:

Spinoza determined that all the books from Gen. to II Kings were composed or compiled by one hand, probably Ezra's¹¹⁹.

Similarly most of the scholars of the nineteenth century do not agree with the traditional view that the episode of the curse on Canaan pertains to the time of Noah (pbAh). They on the other hand hold that the narrative belongs to some later period after the Israelites' invasion of Canaan. It is also suggested that the history of Israel including Genesis was written sometimes during the reign of David (pbAh) or Solomon (pbAh) or perhaps it was entirely rewritten during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Post-Exilic period.

Jonathan Kirsch is perhaps the scholar who has very eminently assessed the period when the story of Dinah and Shechem

tirelessly into his eighties (*Chambers Biographical Dic*, p. 900).

¹¹⁷ *Enc. of Catholicism*, ed. Frank K. Flinn, et al (NY: Facts on File, Inc., 2007), p. 106.

¹¹⁸ *Chambers Bibliographical Dic*, p. 1737 explains:

Spinoza (1632-77) was born in Amsterdam into a Jewish family that had fled from Portugal to escape Catholic persecution. (...). He was expelled from Jewish community for heresy in 1656. (...). He wrote his 'Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being' (c. 1662). The *Tactatus Theologico-Politicus* was published anonymously in 1670 and aroused great interest but was banned in 1674 for its controversial views on the Bible and Christian theology. (...). *He advocated a strictly historical approach to the interpretation of biblical sources and argued that complete freedom of philosophical and scientific speculation was consistent with what was important in the Bible* [stress added]. (...). He is regarded, along with Descartes and Leibniz, as one of the great Rationalist thinkers of the 17th century.

¹¹⁹ *Enc. of Catholicism*, op. cit., p. 106.

found its way in the Holy Scriptures. While commenting on the rape of Dinah he observes that:

Although Gen. 34 purports to describe events of the far-distant past – long before the Israelites were enslaved by Pharaoh, long before they left Egypt under the leadership of Moses, long before they conquered and settled in Canaan – the story of Dinah and Shechem may have found its way into the Holy Scriptures in its current form as late as 400 B.C.E., when the oldest strands of Israelite legend, lore, and law were gathered and woven together into the work that we know as the Five Books of Moses. (...).

At that moment in the history of Israel, according to the conventional wisdom of contemporary biblical scholarship, the priests and scribes who assembled and edited the Bible were in despair over the unhappy fate of the Israelites. The “united kingdom” of David and Solomon had fallen into ruins centuries earlier, and the exploits of these great and powerful kings were the stuff of legend. The northern kingdom, known as Israel, had been conquered by the Assyrian empire in 722 B.C.E, and the northern tribes – the famous “Ten Lost Tribes of Israel” had been dispersed and largely destroyed. The southern kingdom known as Judah was conquered by the Babylonian Empire in 587-586 B.C.E; the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem was razed, and the ruling class of the kingdom was deported to Babylon. A tiny remnant was allowed to return to Jerusalem sometime around 538 B.C.E., when the Babylonian empire was itself conquered by the armies of the Persian Empire. *Only after the Babylonian Exile came to an end, and the Israelites straggled back to Canaan were the holy writings and the traditional lore stitched together into the book that we now know as the Bible at least according to the consensus of contemporary biblical scholarship* [stress added].

When the princes and priests of ancient Israel returned to Canaan they found a land, a culture, and a community in deep crisis. Ritual sacrifices to Yahweh were no longer possible because the Temple had been destroyed, and the land of Canaan was filled with rival clans and tribes that worshipped a pantheon of strange gods and goddesses. Discouraged and disaffected by their long

ordeal, the Israelites were tempted to consort with the strangers among them, to marry them and to worship their deities, sometimes by venerating forest groves and "high places," stones themselves of the sexual services of temple prostitutes or participating in bacchanalian¹²⁰ rituals or perhaps even offering human sacrifice. The texts that make up much of the Bible were plainly obsessed by the powerful allure of strange gods and strange women, both of which they regarded as a threat to the very existence of the Israelites, and they used the holy texts as a rhetorical weapon to coax, cajole, threaten, extort, or simply scare the Chosen people into shunning their neighbors in Canaan and marrying only their fellow worshippers of Yahweh.¹²¹

All this suggests that the enlightened, advanced and critical scholarship of the recent past takes strong exception to the traditional view about Moses' Authorship of the Pentateuch. It also suggests that assertions denigrating¹²² the Canaanites pertain mostly to the post-exilic period. We can, therefore, safely presume that even Noah's curse on Canaan is a product of the same period.

b) A Secret in Gen. 12:6

Even, Earlier to Hobbes, Abraham ibn Ezra had pointed out that Gen. 12:6 had in it a secret but he warned that those who understand the same should keep silent. Aurthur S. Peake, however, had no such scruples. He seems to have revealed the said secret plainly in the following words:

6b was written after the Canaanites had been displaced by the

¹²⁰ 'bacchanalian' means: 'a short period of noisy, drunken merry-making'.

¹²¹ Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road* (NY: Ballantine Books, 1997), p. 87-88.

¹²² 'denigrate' means 'to blacken, esp. a reputation'.

Hebrews.¹²³

The same is obvious from the fact that GNB has recorded this part in brackets as under:

(At that time the Canaanites were still living in the land.)¹²⁴

The New American Bible also shows Gen 12:6b in the brackets:

(The Canaanites were then in the land.)¹²⁵

It is evident from the instances quoted above that the phrase '*the Canaanite was then in the Land*' is a later addition in the text to promote the cause of Israel.

In the foot-note the learned expositor of the *Companion Bible, Oxford* found it opportune to superimpose his own creed by interpreting the text in favor of the theology of St. Paul.

Canaanites ... then in the land. It is evident that from Terah's and Abraham's call, Satan knew the line by which 'the seed of the woman' (3.15) was coming into the world. In ch. 6 he aimed at the whole human race. Now he aims at Abraham and his land. Here is the second explanation of the words 'after that' in 6.4. He pre-occupies the territory ready to dispute the advance. The Canaanite 'was then' — 'being already' there (cp. 13.7). The progeny of the later attempt to corrupt the race had to be destroyed by the sword of Israel, as those 'in the days of Noah' had been by the Flood.¹²⁶

The Christian expositor has zealously gone too far to inject the uncalled-for concept of the seed of woman by which he alludes to Jesus Christ (pbAh). Words, meanings and the context of Gen 3:15 and 12:7b have no provision for inference to Jesus (pbAh) at

¹²³ *Peake's Com. on the Bible*, 1920, p. 146.

¹²⁴ Gen 12:6b GNB.

¹²⁵ Gen 12:6b NAB.

¹²⁶ *The Companion Bible*, ed. Geoffrey Cumberlege (London: Oxf. Univ. Press, na), footnote on Gen 12:6, p. 18.

all. God said to Abraham that '*unto thy seed will I give this land*'¹²⁷. It, therefore, had to be the seed of Abraham (pbAh) and not of Eve or some woman as the expositor has tried to interpret. The word '*seed of woman*' used in Gen. 3:15 also cannot mean Jesus (pbAh) in any specific sense. It has a wider connotation and covers all the progeny of Adam (pbAh) and Eve. Similarly the seed of Abraham (pbAh) covers all his descendants unless and until somebody has been specified by name. It cannot be applied to Jesus (pbAh) or to Israel exclusively. Jesus (pbAh) can by no stretch of thought be pinpointed as the only person meant by the seed of Eve or the seed of woman mentioned in Gen. 3:15 and Gen. 12:7b. Similarly due to his miraculous birth, i.e. without a human father, Jesus cannot be called the seed of Abraham (pbAh). Even if it is taken for granted that Jesus (pbAh) was the only seed of woman and also of Abraham (pbAh), the prophecy pertaining to the possession of the land cannot be applied to him simply because Jesus (pbAh) possessed no lands in Canaan till his death. Jesus (pbAh) also had no descendants to inherit the same. After utter destruction of the race to which Jesus (pbAh) belonged the Romans became the masters of the land promised to the seed of Abraham (pbAh). In view of all this we feel that the learned scholar has widely misused his learning and expertise to mislead the readers who might be reposing utmost trust in the integrity, honesty and scholastic competence of the expositors.

¹²⁷ 12:7b.

Chapter-3

Ch-3. Story of Naked Noah (pbAh)

After a thorough study of the background of the Israelites, analysis of the narrative of the curse, and the end result, it can easily be concluded that the said narrative is not a genuine word of God. Reasons leading to the said opinion are given below.

a) The Narrative of Curse Contradicts the Word of God

Prior to the episode of drunken Noah the Bible had depicted him as the only good man of his time and the righteous one who walked with God, e.g:

a) These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his Generations, and Noah walked with God.¹²⁸

The GNB renders it in the following words:

Noah had no faults and was the only good man of his time. b) The Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Gen 6:9 KJV.

¹²⁹ Gen. 7:1 GNB.

Contradicting the certification of the Lord about Noah (pbAh) as quoted above the story cursing Canaan¹³⁰ portrays Noah (pbAh) as a morally depraved person who planted a vineyard, became drunkard and lay naked in the tent. God's earlier certification about righteousness and perfection of Noah (pbAh), therefore, *'has been changed into falsehood by the lying pen of the scribes'*¹³¹ of Israel. The story of drunken Noah contradicts the earlier declaration of the Lord about him. God cannot be the author of confusion or to err in any case. Similarly God cannot give any certification which may turn out to be incorrect in future.

God is Omnipotent¹³², All-Knowing (Omniscient)¹³³ and All-Wise¹³⁴. He has perfect foreknowledge¹³⁵ of everything to happen

¹³⁰ Gen. 9:20-27.

¹³¹ Jer 8:8 NAB, 1984.

¹³² Gen 17:1 asserts: 'the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the **Almighty** God; (...).

Exo 6:3 asserts: 'And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God **Almighty**,'

¹³³ Ps.139:1-6 writes:

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou (...) art acquainted *with* all my ways. For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. (...). *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.

¹³⁴ It is recorded in Rom 16:27: 'To God only wise, *be* glory (...).'

1Ti 1:17 says:

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

¹³⁵ Isa 48:3 has recorded:

I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; (...). Because I knew that thou *art*

in the future. God cannot misjudge the people or the events. God has no inconsistency in Him¹³⁶. Even the Bible teaches us that God is an unchanging God¹³⁷ and His word endures forever¹³⁸. Similarly God can never be unreasonable or unjust¹³⁹. He is flawless and His revelation, declaration or a promise¹⁴⁰ is always to be fulfilled. Contradiction, misjudgment, fault or frailty all pertain to humankind. The Qur'ān has explicitly laid down the criterion to differentiate the word of God from the word of man in the following words:

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا¹⁴¹

Do they not consider the Qur'ān (with care)? Had it been from some one other than Allah, they would surely have found therein

obstinate, and thy neck *is* an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; (...); before it came to pass I shewed *it* thee: lest thou shouldest say, (...).

¹³⁶ Psa 18:30:

As for God, his way *is* perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he *is* a buckler to all those that trust in him.

¹³⁷ Ps 102:26-27:

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end.

¹³⁸ Isa 14:27:

For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

¹³⁹ Deu 32:4:

He is the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.

Isa 45:21:

(...)? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me.

¹⁴⁰ He remembered His holy promise (Ps 105:42).

¹⁴¹ Al-Qur'ān, 4:82.

much discrepancy.

The presence of any contradiction or discrepancy in the text serves as a clear cut indicator to the fact that the said writing is not from God. As such all anomalies, discrepancies or mistakes must be the handiwork of the human scribes.

When this test is applied to the narrative in Gen. 9:20-27, it looks not to be a revelation from the Lord.

b) The Narrative of Curse Shatters the Concept of God

In the event of taking the drunkenness of Noah and the curse on Canaan as true word of God, it shatters all our concepts about the infinite transcendence of God over man or other creatures in the universe. It cannot be assumed that God can be prejudicial and partial. If God suffers from such imperfection then He can be no better than the human beings. In view of this the episode of Noah's drunkenness cannot co-exist with God's affirmation that Noah (pbAh) was faultless and the only Goodman of his time.¹⁴² God had told Noah (pbAh) in unequivocal terms:

¹⁴² No specific commandment has been recorded in the Bible about general prohibition of wine or alcoholic beverages, and no moral offence or religious sin has been attributed to it. However, some reservations have been made about it:

- 1) Its excessive use has been prohibited:

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (Eph 5:18).

- 2) It was forbidden to Nazarites during their separation:

He shall separate *himself* from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried (Num 6:3).

As to 'Nazarite/Nazirite', *The Sunday School Teacher's Bible Manual*, 1894, p.523, writes:

thee I have seen righteous before me in this generation'¹⁴³.

It was also revealed that Noah (pbAh) lived in the fellowship with God. His fellowship with God should therefore have improved piety and righteousness in Noah (pbAh) than turning Him from righteousness to drunkenness and other vices emanating from it. Such contradictions cannot be ascribed to the All-knowing, All-wise, All-mighty God. This, too, leads the reader to the conclusion that the following story of the curse on Canaan as narrated in the Bible, is obviously baseless:

(...), and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan¹⁴⁴, saw the nakedness of his father, and told

An ascetic sect among the Jews, more fully called *Nezir Elohim*, i.e. 'separated' or 'consecrated to God' or '*Nazirite to God*'. By the law of Nazirites, the devotee vowed for a certain specified period to 'separate himself unto the Lord.' During the days of his separation he was not to drink wine, not to shave his head, and not to render himself ceremonially unclean by touching a dead body, even if the corpse should be that of a near relative. When the time approached for his vow to expire, he was to appear before the priest, make certain prescribed offerings, shave off his hair and burn it, after which he might again drink wine (Nu 6:1-21). (...). John the Baptist was consecrated a Nazirite from his birth, and, like a member of that sect, abstained from liquor.

3) It was forbidden to the priests while engaged in the tabernacle:

Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations: (Lev 10:9).

It can thus be noted that although no commandment of the general prohibition of wine has been recorded in the Bible yet abstention from it has been commanded during certain sacred and religious activities. Similarly its excessive use has also been prohibited under all circumstances. It shows that according to even the present distorted form of the Bible it is not like a man of Noah's calibre to become so excessively drunken as to become indifferent to his nakedness.

¹⁴³ Gen 7:1 KJV.

¹⁴⁴ What purpose this unnecessary parenthetical remark '*the father of Canaan*'

his two brethren without. (...). And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed *be* Canaan;¹⁴⁵ a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.¹⁴⁶

c) The Narrative of Curse is an Interpolation

The careful scrutiny of the narrative of curse reveals that the same is an interpolation in the text. It is conspicuous due to its odd insertion in the Genealogies. This interjection can therefore be identified easily as an intrusion in genealogies of the descendants of Noah (pbAh). The story of the people of Noah (pbAh), the deluge and the covenant had already come to an end with Gen 9:17. The details of the Genealogies had started from verses 9:18-19:

And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham *is* the father of Canaan. These *are* the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.¹⁴⁷

But the same has been interrupted by interpolating the story of curse on Canaan¹⁴⁸. After a break in its flow a fresh start is taken to record the genealogies from Gen 10:1. This odd interruption cannot be ignored. The retouch on Noah (pbAh) seems to be the product of some later period which is evident

serves except some ulterior motive of the redactor!

¹⁴⁵ Why 'Cursed *be* Canaan'? What offence had he committed? He may not have even been present there at the moment. Why to punish him for the offence, if any, of his father, and not his own?

¹⁴⁶ Gen 9:20-27 KJV.

¹⁴⁷ Gen 9:18-19 KJV.

¹⁴⁸ As recorded and explained in the above paragraph.

due to the fact that it has disturbed the natural flow and sequence of the narrative. Such discrepancies cannot be attributed to God. The forgery must, therefore, be attributed to the scribes, priests or redactors of the Bible.

d) Miscarriage of Justice

A discreet study of the story of curse reveals that it also suffers from many other discrepancies. According to the narrative of the story of curse, it was Noah (pbAh) who planted the vineyard. He became drunkard and lay naked in the tent. Ham his son blundered into the tent spontaneously without any foreknowledge that Noah (pbAh) was lying buck-naked therein. Naturally, Ham had neither planned nor intended to see the said nakedness. Under the circumstances, it was humanly impossible for Ham to avoid any abrupt glance at Noah (pbAh). Ham, as such, must be held innocent in the matter. As regards Canaan, son of Ham, he was neither present there nor any role has been ascribed to him in the episode. Being the youngest son of Ham it can also be presumed that Canaan might not have been born till the time of the episode. At the most Canaan might have been an infant till the time of the said incident. Curse on Canaan therefore has no justification at all.

Ham too was not to blame under any canons of justice except a by chance and unintentional glance at the naked Noah (pbAh); but as far as Canaan is concerned, he had nothing to do with the event. It was Noah (pbAh) who could have been the alleged culprit of planting the vineyard, drinking wine, and lying naked in the tent. Naturally Noah (pbAh) was the first one to blame and, if at all, Ham could be put to blame, it was only a minor, negligible, and unintentional act. As against this, it is surprising to know that Noah (pbAh) takes no liability on him. He also spares

his son Ham and picks up Canaan for the curse arbitrarily. Canaan as such has been made a scape-goat to place on him the sins of Noah (pbAh) and Ham. It is an example of 'to rob Peter, to pay Paul'. The narrative as such fails to justify the end result, i.e. curse on Canaan. No reasonable person can draw the same conclusion from the events narrated in Gen. 9:20-27. This, therefore, is a glaring instance of miscarriage of justice because it transfers the liability from the actual culprit to the innocent one without a cause. God Himself had given the decision:

You must stop judging unjustly; you must no longer be partial to the wicked! Defend the rights of the poor and the orphans; be fair to the needy and the helpless. Rescue them from the power of evil people.¹⁴⁹

In view of the above, no one can expect injustice or partiality from the Lord. In the later times, however, St. Paul and his followers utilized the same theme to develop their doctrine of transferring the sin from the actual culprits to the innocent one. The doctrine of salvation places all the sins of the Christians at the sinless Son of God crucified by the Romans on the charge of insurrection from him. Later on, due to ingenuity of St. Paul and his followers, the Roman act of atrocity was interpreted as self-sacrifice of Jesus to expiate the sins of the Christians. Hence, all blessings go to the Romans and curse for killing the God of the Christians falls to the share of the Jews, i.e. the race to whom Jesus (pbAh) belonged. Consequently the Christians were free to commit all the inequities without any fear of retribution because they enjoyed blanket bail provided by St. Paul's concept of death to sin and life in Christ. The dying saviour had taken on him all the sins of the Christians merely due to their belief in the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ (pbAh),

¹⁴⁹ Ps 82:2-4 GNB.

the Son of God. We however, observe that aside from a wishful thinking the concept of transferring the liability of one's inequities to others creates a unique tradition of the miscarriage of justice and no other community except the followers of St. Paul can even think of it.

Reverting to the narrative of the curse we find that out of four sons of Ham, Noah (pbAh) drops out three elder sons of Ham and picks up Canaan, the youngest, arbitrarily for the curse. Genesis fails to provide any reason to justify selection of the youngest one sparing three elder sons of Ham. It is against all the norms of reason, law, justice and morality. Had God been there, He would not have set such a bad tradition of acquitting the culprit and punishing the innocent one. As such, the irreconcilable anomalies and complete absence of cause and effect relationship from the story of curse on Canaan lead us to the unavoidable conclusion that God could not be the author of the absurdities, such as we find jumbled together in Gen. 9:20-27.

e) God a Silent Spectator of the Event

Supposing God as the narrator of the event of drunken Noah we find Him in the role of a silent spectator or an impartial observer/reporter of the event. He perhaps had no concern about moral aspects of the incident due to which he recorded the same without passing any moral or legal judgment on it. As such, God obviously connived at the alleged misconduct of Noah as well as of Ham to make the curse proceed straight to Canaan to deprive the Canaanites from their legal rights as free citizens of the Land. The story in its present form also contains a tacit approval of the Lord for drinking vine and transferring

penalty of ones misdeeds to others who might have done no wrong.

According to the Bible, Noah (pbAh) neither repents nor takes any liability on him. He spares even Ham who actually saw him naked. God does not reprimand Noah or Ham. God's justice and his judgment was therefore prejudicial and favouritistical in the matter and against the faith of Abraham (pbAh), who while pleading for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, had said to the Lord:

That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?¹⁵⁰

The firm faith of Abraham (pbAh) in the justice and impartiality of the Lord also shows that he was ignorant about this episode of Noah and his transferring the liability thereof to an innocent person. Had Abraham (pbAh) any Knowledge of Noah's curse on Canaan, he couldn't have dared to enter into the dialogue with God as we find in Gen 18:23-32. Alternatively Abraham's ignorance about the tradition of transferring one's guilt to the innocent people as recorded in the Gen 9:20 implies that the said tradition did not exist till the time of Abraham (pbAh) and it received its publication at least a thousand years after him.

Had Noah (pbAh) actually cursed the Canaanites to be the slaves of the Semites the Lord would have revealed it to Abraham (pbAh) when he called him to go to Canaan. We also find no reference to the slavery of the Canaanites in Gen. 12:6 where an insertion has been made to the effect that the Canaanites were then living in the land. Abraham (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh) and Jacob (pbAh) being the genuine and rightful descendants of Shem could

¹⁵⁰ Gen. 18:25.

have behaved as overlords on the Hittites and other descendants of Canaan who stood accursed to be their slaves. There was no ground for Abraham's pathetic condition and humility with which he had to bow before the Hittites repeatedly to beg the Machpelah cave to bury his wife Sarah there as depicted in Gen 23:1-19.

Abraham's descendants, i.e. Isaac (pbAh) and Jacob (pbAh) also lived in Canaan as strangers without any awareness about the curse on the Canaanites otherwise they would have lived in Canaan as Lords of the land and not as miserable foreigners or outsiders without any proprietary rights even to possess a piece of land to pitch their tents. The curse of slavery on Canaan from Noah (pbAh) was therefore a fabrication pertaining to a period when the Israelites had already subjugated various parts of Canaan while the expedition to dispossess them from remaining parts was yet in process. They could have used the said curse as a weapon to humiliate and subjugate the Canaanites. That was the opportune time to consolidate and authenticate the achievement of Israelites through their fighting force coupled with a divine sanction for the slavery of the Canaanites with retrospective effect. The subjugation of the Canaanites by the Israelites was not therefore a prophecy or a curse fulfilled, but a subsequent fabrication presented as a prophecy with retrospective effect, about two thousand years after the death of Noah (pbAh).

Factually Abraham (pbAh) was a great prophet of the Lord who was made the leader of humankind (امام الناس). Initially he started preaching the word of God to his native community at Ur. After his rejection by the king, the people and his father and in face of mounting animosity he found no future prospects for the success of his mission at Ur. Abraham (pbAh), therefore, left Ur and went from place to place in the cause of the Lord. He went to Haran, Canaan, Egypt, Arabia and perhaps to Yemen only to

convey the message of the Lord and to guide the people towards the worship of one and the only God. Abraham (pbAh) traveled throughout the populated regions only to fulfill his mission without there being any promise of land or descendants or any other temporal inducement whatsoever.

About 600 years after Abraham (pbAh) it was Moses (pbAh) who was deputed by the Lord to deliver the Israelites from their slavery under the Egyptians. The Lord made a covenant with the Israelites through Moses (pbAh) and gave them the law. Subsequently the Israelites were directed through Moses (pbAh) to go to Canaan with a promise from the Lord that they will succeed to possess it. The promise of the land of Canaan was, therefore, made with Moses (pbAh) and with the Israelites during the Exodus. No such specific promise was made with Abraham (pbAh) as pretended by the Israelites. It is, therefore, plausible to think that promise of Land with Abraham (pbAh) and a curse on the Canaanites from the time of Noah (pbAh) are fabrications of the Israelites which took its present shape some time after the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites or perhaps around 400 BC as mentioned earlier.

f) The Story of Curse Serves no Good Purpose of God

The book of God must contain absolute truth, wisdom and authentic moral guidance for humankind. A revelation is supposed to provide correct knowledge about God and his attributes. It must teach moral lessons to promote justice (Social or Judicial) and righteousness. Purpose of the revelation must be the welfare of humankind in the world and in the hereafter. God is not expected to say or do anything in vain. In view of this, it can be noted that the earlier revelation about

Noah's righteousness and his fellowship with God¹⁵¹ contained a useful example of the righteous conduct of Noah (pbAh) due to which he received the highest reward of living in fellowship with the Lord. It therefore serves as a lesson or an incentive to the people to do good and earn the blissful appreciation of the Lord. The wicked one stood destroyed in the Deluge and the righteous were saved by the Lord. The deterrent punishment for the transgression could therefore create an ever lasting impact on the future conduct of humankind. The purpose of telling the story is therefore evident from the end result.

As against this we find no good purpose of the revelation about the drunken Noah and his nakedness. It conflicts with the virtuous conduct of Noah (pbAh) as certified by the Lord. Prior to the Deluge, Noah (pbAh) had always been a good man, who attained the most exalted position of living in fellowship with God. Noah (pbAh) had himself witnessed the destruction of the wicked ones due to which it was impossible for him to indulging in the profanity of wine. The story therefore has no credentials. It only serves the self interest of Israel by condemning the nations contending with them.

In the present case God seems to lack sound judgment. He is neither just nor impartial. If such a miscarriage of justice is approved by God, then there can neither be a judge nor justice in the world. The story of drunken Noah and curse on Canaan, therefore, suggests that God has varying standards of justice and equity and there is no constancy or impartiality in His judgments. God's connivance over Noah's drinking wine and transferring his son Ham's guilt to Canaan sets a bad precedent of encouraging the wine bibbers and the unjust. Whereas, the earlier story about righteous conduct of Noah leading to his

¹⁵¹ Gen. 6:9-10 and 7:1

salvation and preventive punishment to the sinful transgressors serves the purpose of the Lord to promote righteousness in the world; the retouch, i.e. the story of the naked Noah, leading to unjustified curse on Canaan, serves as approval and encouragement for drinking wine and spreading injustice in the world. In spite of the fact that the story of curse from Noah (pbAh), may serve some cause of Israelites by debasing different nations occupying Canaan, yet the naked and drunken Noah and unjustified transfer of guilt to Canaan is a clear-cut blasphemy against Noah as well as the Lord.

g) Why Ham, Cush, Egypt and Libya not mentioned?

Another cause of acquitting Ham and dropping his three sons Cush, Egypt and Libya is yet to be explained. Apparently Noah was to blame for his act of excessive drinking and lying naked in the tent. Next to Noah (pbAh), Ham could have been to blame, if, at all some one was to be cursed. The Israelites had two hindrances to curse Ham or to depict all his descendants as slaves of the Semites and especially of the Israelites. One that such a curse on Ham would involve Ham and his descendants through Cush, Egypt and Libya who instead of being slaves of the Semites had been holding the Israelites under their slavery for a long time.

Biblical scholars have also pointed to it, e.g:

Ham is the ancestor of the greatest and most powerful nations known to the ancient Hebrews. Cush (Ethiopia), Mizraim (Egypt), Put (Libya?) and Canaan (Phoenicia). The sons of Canaan are Zidon, his first born, and the nations inhabiting Palestine (...). To the south spread the great nations of the race of Ham, the Egyptians, whose Kinsmen the Canaanites had occupied Palestine, and perhaps were regarded as allied by race to the great nations

in Babylonia.¹⁵²

Genesis itself throws light on the same:

And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen¹⁵³ between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.

And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.¹⁵⁴

Since Abraham (pbAh) and his forefathers had themselves remained under the rule of Nimrod¹⁵⁵ son of Cush, at Ur therefore the Israelites could hardly demean Hamites as the slaves of the Semites. Nimrod had become the world's first great conqueror who ruled over regions such as Babylonia and Assyria etc. Ur was in Babylonia where Abraham (pbAh) and his ancestors served as subjects of Nimrod. History would therefore invalidate any curse of slavery on Cush, the father, or Ham the grandfather of Nimrod. Similarly, Ashures built Nineveh, Rehoboth and Calah. The kings of the said regions such as

¹⁵² F. G. Foakes Jackson, *Biblical History of the Hebrews* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1909), p. 14-15.

¹⁵³ 'Resen' was a city between Nineveh and Calah (*Strog's*, p. 840).

¹⁵⁴ Gen. 10:7-14 KJV.

¹⁵⁵ *Nelson's Illustrated Enc. of Bible Facts*, ed. J.I.Packer, etc. (Nasville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), P. 672 writes:

Nimrod (valiant; strong), a son of Cush (Gen 10:8-9; 1 Chron 1:10). His kingdom included Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh, cities of Shinar, but also included Assyria.

Ashurbanipal¹⁵⁶, Tiglath-Pileser¹⁵⁷, Shalmaneser¹⁵⁸ invaded the Northern Kingdom of Israel from time to time; and, finally, Sargon II¹⁵⁹ destroyed Samaria and took ten tribes of Israel in exile to Nineveh and other places. Ashurbanipal had also released king Manasseh of Judah from prison. As such there was long history of the subjugation of Israel and their ancestors under Cush son of Ham and his descendants. Infliction of a curse on them would, therefore, have highlighted a clear cut perversion of the well established facts.

As regards Egypt the other son of Ham the Israelites themselves remained enslaved under the descendants of Mizraim (Egypt) for about 400 years. It was therefore impossible for Israel to claim their primacy over them. As for Libya, son of Ham the Israelites never had any confrontation with him or his descendants. Cursing them would therefore serve no good purpose of Israel.

Another reason to spare Ham along his three sons older than Canaan was the futility of hitting beyond or beside the target. The main targets of the Israelites during the post-Exodus period were the Canaanites who possessed the Land of Canaan and the Israelites were fighting against them desperately to defeat them and capture the land of Canaan. The Canaanites were repelling the attacks of the Israelites boldly. The curse was therefore invented to demoralize the Canaanites. It had nothing to do with Ham or his descendants through his sons other than Canaan. Only a curse on Canaan could serve the cause of Israel. The time selected for the episode was soon

¹⁵⁶ Ashurbanipal, Assyrian Emperor, 668-630 BC.

¹⁵⁷ Tiglath-Pileser, Assyrian Emperor, 744-727 BC.

¹⁵⁸ Shalmaneser III, -do- 858-824; IV, 782-773; V, 726-722 BC.

¹⁵⁹ Sargon II, Assyrian Emperor, 721-705 BC. Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, fell, and came to an end for good, at his hands.

after the deluge when only three sons of Noah i.e Shem, Ham and Japheth went with Noah (pbAh) out of the Boat¹⁶⁰. It must have been sometime after the flood that the sons of Noah (pbAh) begot their sons.¹⁶¹ Due to there being no proof about Canaan's birth till the time of the episode the Israelites found some perplexity to implicate him directly. The only safe course open to them was to implicate Canaan through Ham his father. After depicting Ham seeing Noah (pbAh) lying buck-naked in the tent the Composers of Genesis needed only a leap from Ham to descend directly on Canaan. Hence, they took no scruples to find any reason or justification for putting the curse on Canaan instead of Ham. As pointed out earlier Ham had Kush, Egypt, Libya, and Canaan as his Sons.¹⁶² Canaan was the fourth listed son of Ham.

The story of curse on Canaan, therefore, contains the first instance of miscarriage of justice recorded in the OT which implicates a great Prophet aside from showing connivance of the Lord over the vindication of the evildoer and inculcation of the innocent one. The curse might also have been invented to fortify the strict embargo on the inter-tribes marriage between the Canaanites and the Jews in the post-Exilic period.

h) Noah (pbAh) a Carpenter or a Husbandman

From the story of Noah's building the boat, we find him a good craftsman as a carpenter. Islamic traditions also depict him as such:

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ اصْنَعْ الْفُلَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحَيْنَا إِذًا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُورَ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ

¹⁶⁰ Gen. 9:18.

¹⁶¹ Gen. 10:1.

¹⁶² Gen. 10:6.

اٰتٰنٰنِیْ وَاهْلَکَ اِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَیْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تُخَاطِبُنِیْ فِی الَّذِیْنَ ظَلَمُوْا اِنَّهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ۔¹⁶³

So We inspired him (with this message): "Construct the Ark within Our sight and under Our guidance: then when comes Our Command, and the fountains of the earth gush forth, take thou on board pairs of every species, male and female, and thy family-except those of them against whom the Word has already gone forth: And address Me not in favour of the wrong-doers; for they shall be drowned (in the Flood).

It has also been confirmed in the following words:

وَاَوْحِیْ اِلٰی نُوحٍ اِنَّهُ لَنْ یُّؤْمَرَ مِنْ قَوْمِکَ اِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ اٰمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا کَانُوْا یَفْعَلُوْنَ۔ وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلَکَ بِاَعْیُنِنَا وَوَحِّیْنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبُنِیْ فِی الَّذِیْنَ ظَلَمُوْا اِنَّهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ - وَیَصْنَعُ الْفُلَکَ وَکَلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَیْهِ مَلَاٌ مِنْ قَوْمِہٖ سَخِرُوْا مِنْہٗ قَالَ اِنْ تَسْخَرُوْا مِنّْٰی فَاِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْکُمْ کَمَا تَسْخَرُوْنَ۔ فَسَوَفَ تَلْعَلُوْنَ مَنْ یَّاتِیْہِ عَذَابٌ یَّجْزِیْہٖ وَیَحِلُّ عَلَیْہِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِیْمٌ۔¹⁶⁴

And it was revealed to Nuh: 'none of your people will believe in you save those who have already believed. Do not grieve at what they do. Build an ark under Our watchful eyes, according to Our bidding. Do not plead with Me for the wrongdoers; they shall all be drowned.' And he built the ark. And whenever the elders of his people passed by him, they jeered him. He said: 'if you mock us we shall mock you as you mock us. You shall know who will get a punishment which disgraces him, and who will be afflicted by an everlasting scourge.'¹⁶⁵

In view of the statement of the Qur'ān, Noah (pbAh) might have been adept in carpentry; and he was trained in the art of ship-making through revelation by God. There seems no convincing reason for his change of profession and becoming a tiller of soil as stated in Gen 9:20. Genesis had already narrated that Cain, son of Adam (pbAh), was a tiller of the ground long long before

¹⁶³ Al-Qur'ān, 23:27.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Qur'ān, Hud 36:39.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Qur'ān, tr. N. J. Dawood, Revised by Dr. Zayid (Bairut: Dar Al-Choura), p. 159.

Noah)¹⁶⁶. As such the biblical statement about Noah (pbAh), as being the first tiller of soil, further loses its credibility.

There is another point to be highlighted. Although the Bible has not categorically and unequivocally asserted that Noah (pbAh) was a messenger of the Lord; but the Qur'ān has presented him as a messenger of Allah Almighty in many of its sūrahs, e.g. 7:59, 61, 11:25, 23:23, 26:107, 29:14, 7:11, etc. No doubt Noah (pbAh) was the most distinguished prophet of the Lord in between Adam (pbAh) and Abraham (pbAh):

وَأَنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرَاهِيمَ¹⁶⁷

Verily among his followers was Ibrāhīm.

The Lord confirmed Noah (pbAh) as a devotee most thankful, a righteous and believing person and the one who was blessed abundantly, e.g. Al-Qur'ān 17:3, 37:75-81 & 66:10, etc.

Similarly, we learn from the Qur'ān that Almighty Allah showered his blessings on Noah (pbAh) when, after the deluge, he came down from the ark:

قِيلَ يَا نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى أُمَمٍ مِمَّنْ مَعَكَ وَأُمَمٌ سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُمْ مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ¹⁶⁸

The word came: 'O Noah! Come down (from the Ark) with peace from Us, and blessing on thee and on some of the peoples (who will spring) from those with thee: but (there will be other) peoples to whom We shall grant their pleasures (for a time), but in the end will a grievous penalty reach them from Us.'

Bible, too, has recorded similar blessings on Noah (pbAh) and his sons after they came out of the boat:

¹⁶⁶ Gen 4:2.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Qur'ān, 37:83.

¹⁶⁸ Qur'ān, 11:48.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.¹⁶⁹

God's blessings on Noah (pbAh) therefore leave no chance for Noah's drinking wine to such an extent that it resulted in his lying naked in the tent. Hence the story of drunken Noah and curse on Canaan is without any substance in it.

¹⁶⁹ Al Gen 9:1 KJV.

Ch-4. Scholastic Comments

on the Curse of Noah (pbAh)

After the death of Joshua the Israelites were left with no leader of that stature. Consequently they remained in an oscillating position for about two centuries in Canaan winning at one place and losing at another. This was perhaps the period, when the Israelites felt the need to increase their military might to defeat their enemies in the battle field and also to demoralize them by inventing divine sanctions for expulsion, slavery or elimination of the Canaanites as well as other nations around them. In addition to Gen 25:27-34¹⁷⁰, aimed at denouncing the Edomites, some other assertions of the Bible are as follows:

(...) for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron

¹⁷⁰ Gen 25:27-34 is reproduced below for ready reference:

And the boys [Esau and Jacob] grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison [GNB: 'eating the animals Esau killed']: but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob 'sod pottage' [GNB: 'was cooking some bean soup']: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* 'faint' [GNB: 'hungry']: (Gen 25:30) And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red '*pottage*' [GNB: 'red stuff']; for I *am* 'faint' [GNB: 'starving']: therefore was his name called Edom. (Gen 25:31) And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. (Gen 25:32) And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? (Gen 25:33) And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. (Gen 25:34) Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

chariots, and though they be strong.¹⁷¹

Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites¹⁷²! the word of the LORD is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant¹⁷³ [stress added].¹⁷⁴

(...) and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.¹⁷⁵

Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.¹⁷⁶

The baseless propaganda that Noah (pbAh) had cursed the Canaanites to be the slaves of the Semites, i.e. the Israelites, was, therefore, designed to destroy the morale of the Canaanites on the one hand and to boost up the low spirits of Israel on the other. Thus a fabrication, pertaining to the period after the conquest of substantial parts of Canaan, was inserted in the

¹⁷¹ Jos 17:18 KJV.

¹⁷² Sunday School Teacher's Bible Manual, 1894, p. 125, explains:

'Cherethites' [Heb. Kerethim = 'executioners']. A nation or tribe inhabiting the Philistine country or its southern portion, apparently on or near the sea coast of the Mediterranean. The designations of the cherethites and Pelethites who constituted David's bodyguard signify 'executioners' and 'runners.'

¹⁷³ What a furious and wrathful God! And it is strange that there is no noble cause or justifiable reason for this indiscriminate wrath, (like polytheism or idolatry), which could have been a genuine and sufficient reason for their extinction. Had the right path been made abundantly clear to them with full force of argument, and to their satisfactory convincing, leaving no justified reason for their denial, they too had good chances to turn to the Lord and the same was perhaps desired of them. But the Israelites' only aim was to quench their thirst of power and land, and God was used as a toy in the hands of the Israelites.

¹⁷⁴ Zep 2:5 KJV.

¹⁷⁵ Zec 14:21 KJV.

¹⁷⁶ Exo 15:15 KJV.

Bible, to give it a retrospective effect from the time of Noah (pbAh). Similarly repeated assurance regarding permanent possession of the entire land of Canaan by the descendants of Abraham (pbAh), i.e. the Israelites, too, was a later invention to convince the Israelites that they were destined to possess the Land. Hence, they were fighting only to eliminate or to dispossess the so-called illegitimate occupants of that land. The promise was, however, shown from the distant past, i.e. from the time of Abraham (pbAh) while the expulsion or annihilation of the Canaanites would be the fulfillment of the long outstanding curse of Noah (pbAh) and the commandments of the Lord stated above. Scholarly study and analysis of the Bible, however, reveals something different from such pretensions of the Israelites. It is said that:

The literary analysis of the Pentateuch, established by Julius Wellhausen and others in the nineteenth century, recognizes three independent sources. The earliest of these, the Yahvist (J), is dated to the united monarchy (c. 950 BCE) and is viewed as using the Abraham tradition to support the claims of the Davidic Empire. The Elohist (E) in Gen 20-22 is dated to the time of the prophets of (c. eighth century BCE). The Priestly (P) source is of postexilic date (c. 400 BCE) and is found only in the episodes of Gen 17 and 23 and in a few notices.

While this literary analysis has long held sway, some scholars have begun to dispute the dates given to the sources and to understand their relationship to each other in quite a different way. In this view some of the early J stories (Gn. 12:10-20, 16, 18:1, 18:10-14, 21:2, 21:6-7) and the so-called E source were used by the J author along with his own material to shape the biblical story of Abraham as a major national tradition in the exilic period. The P writer made a few additions to this tradition in the postexilic period, while the story about the kings of the east in Gen 14 was the latest addition in the Hellenistic period. (...).

Abraham is not mentioned in pre-exilic prophecy. It is only with the crisis of the exile that the figure of Abraham becomes a

paradigm of hope for the restoration of nationhood and Israel's return to the land of its forefathers [stress added]. It is especially in 'Second Isaiah' (Isaiah. 41:8-10¹⁷⁷, 51:1-2¹⁷⁸) that Abraham is the focus of Israelites identity and destiny. So too in the exilic Psalm 105¹⁷⁹ Israel's identity is based upon the election and covenant of Abraham. The Sinai covenant is passed over in silence.¹⁸⁰

Thus according to the scholastic observation quoted above, the Yahvist (J) source had utilized Abrahamic tradition for the first time during the united monarchy (c 950 BCE) to support the claim of the Davidic Empire while the biblical story of Abraham (pbAh) was shaped into major national tradition in the exilic period. There had been no mention of Abraham (pbAh) in the Sinai covenant or in the history of faith in the Israelites in the pre-exilic prophecy:

¹⁷⁷ Isaiah. 41:8-10 (GNB) is noted hereunder:

(8) But you, Israel my servant, you are the people that I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham, my friend. (9) I brought you from the ends of the earth; I called you from its farthest corners and said to you, 'You are my servant.' I did not reject you, but chose you. (10) Do not be afraid---I am with you! I am your God---let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you.

¹⁷⁸ Isaiah. 51:1-2 (GNB) states:

The LORD says, 'Listen to me, you that want to be saved, you that come to me for help. Think of the rock from which you came, the quarry from which you were cut. (2) Think of your ancestor, Abraham, and of Sarah, from whom you are descended. When I called Abraham, he was childless, but I blessed him and gave him children; I made his descendants numerous.'

¹⁷⁹ Psalms 105:6-10 (KJV), for example, is as follows:

O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

He *is* the LORD our God: his judgments *are* in all the earth.

He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations.

Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;

And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant:

¹⁸⁰ *Enc. of Religion*, 1:14-15.

'Abraham', Graves and Patai note, 'is shown no particular reverence in the Bible until Ezekiel's time ... neither is Sarah, until Ezra's (p.165). Their point is that the mythological record of Genesis is the composite construct of a much later religious establishment for whom the attachment to monotheistic belief is as much a defence of minority identity in an unfriendly world as it is a theological revolution.'¹⁸¹

Authors of the same book further note:

Abraham is shown no particular reverence in the Bible until Ezekiel's time (early sixth century BC–Ezekiel xxxiii:24); neither is Sarah, until Ezra's, when Isaiah 51:2 was written.¹⁸²

It was during the exilic period that Abraham (pbAh) became a paradigm of hope for restoration and Israel's return to the land of its forefathers. It was during this period or some time after the return of the Israelites from the exile that they needed to assert their better rights on the land of Canaan on the pretext of inheriting the same from Abraham (pbAh). During the same period, they also had to fabricate various stories to disqualify the Canaanites, the Moabites, the Ammonites the Ishmaelites, the Edomites and others from claiming proprietary rights on the said lands. The curse of Noah (pbAh) on Canaan and the story of incest suggesting illegitimacy of the Moabites and the Ammonites may also be evaluated in the background stated above.

Another scholar is of the view that:

Modern biblical scholarship generally assumes that much, if not all, of the Bible was compiled and reduced to writing in its present form some time around 600 B.C.E. by editors (or redactors) who drew on sources and traditions of great antiquity, added glosses and even whole new passages of their own, and tacked on new books of more recent authorship.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ *Hebrew Myths*, p, xxiii.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 165.

¹⁸³ Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of Road*, 1997, p. 43.

Jonathan Kirsch further writes in a footnote:

But, as we have already seen, Gen. was probably edited by redactors working sometime after 400 B.C.E, and the biblical author who retold the story of Judah and Tamar was intimately familiar with the laws of Deuteronomy.¹⁸⁴

Since reliable sources suggest the compilation of Gen. in between 600 to 400 B.C., therefore, its authorship can in no case be ascribed to Moses (pbAh). It is a much later composition of the Israeli scribes and redactors. In view of the above we believe that the curse on Canaan did not emanate from Noah (pbAh). It had its origin in the need of Israelites arising much later than the Exodus period and most probably after the return of the Israelites from Exile. Anyhow, the Israelites found it expedient to give a retrospective effect to self-concocted story of Noah's drunkenness leading to curse on Canaan. Modern scholars also endorse them:

The story with its animosity against the Canaanites and prophecy of bondage probably dates from some time after the invasion of Canaan.¹⁸⁵

The Catholic Com. has observed:

The curse figures the condition of the Canaanites on the completion of Israelites' conquest of their land.¹⁸⁶ (....).

The purpose of the list is to emphasize the privilege conferred on Israel in its election by God as His special people.¹⁸⁷

Dummelow says:

It was to set forth the moral and religious position of Israel

¹⁸⁴ *The Harlot by the Side of Road*, op.cit., footnote on p. 126.

¹⁸⁵ *Adam Clarke's Com. on the B.*, Abridged by Ralph Earle (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1985), p 345.

¹⁸⁶ *The Catholic Com. on Holy Scripture*, ed. Dom Bernard Orchard, Rev. E. F. Sutcliffe, etc (NY: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1960), p. 191, under v. 25.

¹⁸⁷ *The Catholic Com.*, op. cit., p. 192, Column 1, para 2 (e).

among other nations of the world. Canaan represents the nations of Palestine subdued by Israel.¹⁸⁸

The Enc. Judaica has indirectly confessed the late origin of the story of curse on Canaan in the following words:

This passage has posed a problem for modern interpreters, many of whom see in it an etiology¹⁸⁹ of the historical conditions which brought about Israel's rise to power, namely, the domination of the descendants of Shem over the people of Canaan. The curse upon Canaan mirrors an alliance of the Israelites and the sons of Japheth against a common enemy, the Canaanites. This would best fit the period of David and Solomon, during which there were often close ties between Israel and the Philistines, who were part of the sea Peoples who originated in the Aegean area (Gen. 10:2,4,5). The invasions by the Sea Peoples against Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean are recorded in inscriptions of Pharaoh Merneptah (c. 1212-1203 B.C.E.) and Ramesses III (1186-1155 B.C.E.).

Noah's curse upon Canaan, therefore, reflects a true historical situation: the alliance between the children of Israel (Shem) and the Sea-Peoples (Japheth) at the expense of the Canaanites. This special background of Gen. 9:20-27 accords very well with its traditional-historical isolation, long noted by commentators.¹⁹⁰

Etiology (aetiology) means the assignment of a cause or reason. As such even the authoritative Jewish scholarship admits the problematic nature of the passage to which they have alluded to as an etiology of the historical conditions bringing about Israel's rise to power. In other words the actual cause of the curse was not the misconduct of Ham or Canaan but the Historical resistance posed by the Canaanites against the onslaughts of Israel thousands of years after Noah (pbAh). This, therefore, reveals that the story of drunken Noah and curse on Canaan was fabricated only to fulfill the need of the Israelites to denounce the Canaanites

¹⁸⁸ *Dummelow*, Gen. 9:25.

¹⁸⁹ 'etiology', also aetiology, means 'study of causes and reasons'.

¹⁹⁰ *Enc. Judaica*. 4:391, s.v. 'Canaan'.

who were resisting resolutely any further assaults of Israel. The propaganda of curse of slavery on the Canaanites therefore aimed at demoralizing the Canaanites besides justifying the maltreatment of the Canaanites by the Israelites.

A commentary on this part in the *New American Bible* will also be of some interest to the readers.

This story seems to be a composite of two earlier accounts. In the one Ham was guilty whereas in the other it was Canaan. One purpose of this story is to justify the Israelites enslavement of the Canaanites because of certain indecent sexual practices in the Canaanite religion. Obviously the story offers no justification for enslaving African Negroes, even though Canaan is presented as a son of Ham because the land of Canaan belonged to Hamitic Egypt at the time of the Israelite invasion.¹⁹¹

The remarks of Robert A. Davis, of the Univ. of Glasgow, in the editorial introduction to *Hebrew Myths* are quite intriguing on the subject:

The famous, if puzzling, tale of Noah's drunkenness is revised as a classic story of filial castration, the Genesis text seen as a humanization of Mesopotamian and Aegean mythological precursors hastily and incoherently re-edited as a shame narrative in order to justify Hebrew enslavement of Cannaties.¹⁹²

The authors of *Heb. Myth* also comment:

1. The Genesis version of this myth has been carelessly edited. Ham could not be blamed, in justice, for noticing his father's nakedness; and Noah could never have laid such a grave curse upon Ham's innocent son Canaan, even if this involuntary act had been Ham's only fault. The text: 'And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his little son had done unto him', points to a gap in the

¹⁹¹ *Friends Family Edition*, Catholic Bible Publishers, Wichita Kansas, 1971-72, P. 8.

¹⁹² Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd, 1963), p xxii.

narrative, plausibly filled by the midrashic account of his castration. Noah's curse shows that the sinner was little Canaan, not Ham. 'Ham, father of' is clearly an editorial insertion.

2. The myth is told to justify Hebrew enslavement of Canaanites—Canaan was *Chnas* for the Phoenecians, and *Agenor* for the Greeks. In one midrashic [sic] Passage, sodomy has been added to Ham's crimes. A long list of Canaanite sexual offences is contained in *Leviticus* xviii; and king Rehoboam's subjects are reproached in 1Kings xiv:24 for practicing 'all the abominations of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the children of Israel.'¹⁹³

All this shows that the story of curse on Canaan was fabricated only to propagate Israel's superiority over the Canaanites and to justify and cover the cruel treatment and elimination of the people subdued by Israel. By these tactics they tried to validate the atrocities of Israel providing divine sanction for the same. The curse from Noah was, therefore, a later invention pertaining to the post exilic period but the Israelites pretended skillfully that it existed since the time of Noah (pbAh). Comments of Charles Gore also allude to the same:

Canaan is cursed though Ham was the Offender, because at the time of writing of the corrupt influence of the Canaanites and their nature-cults on the life and religion of Israel was recognized in the circle among which this history was written.¹⁹⁴

Charles Gore's comments as recorded above imply that the story of curse did not pertain to the time of Noah (pbAh). It was written much later than he, and during a period when the writers of the said story already had before them the corrupt influences of the Canaanites which they experienced only in the Post-Exodus period. As nature cults and corrupt influences of the Canaanites were not known to the Israelites before they entered Canaan therefore the story of curse could not have existed before that.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 121-122.

¹⁹⁴ Charles Gore, *A New Com.*, p. 47, 48.

No enlightened scholar supports the tradition of the curse to the person or time of Noah (pbAh). Most of them believe that it pertains to the post-exilic period. Noah (pbAh), therefore, had nothing to do with it.

Ch-5. Confusing Statements of the Bible

Although the Jews as well as the Christians maintain that the Bible is the word of God through and through, yet the modern scholarship does not consider it so. Modern scholars differ from the dogmatic opinion because they find thousands of mistakes, misstatements, contradictions, and incompatibilities in it. The narrative in the Genesis cannot, therefore, be taken as an absolute truth. Moreover it lacks exactitude. There are numerous confounded accounts in the Genesis. Some instances from the lives of Terah, Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Sarah and Rebecca are afforded below to show that various assertions as well as the story of Lot (pbAh) can by no means be treated as revelation from the Lord.

a) Age of Terah

The Bible says:

And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.¹⁹⁵

(...). And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife¹⁹⁶;

¹⁹⁵ Gen 11:26 KJV.

¹⁹⁶ It is to be noted and born in mind that Terah here states two relationships of Sarai with him, i.e., 'his daughter in law', and 'his son Abram's wife' (which, in fact, is a single relationship), and does not state any third relationship, i.e., 'his own daughter from some woman other than Abraham's mother'.

and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.¹⁹⁷

It transpires from the above that Abraham (pbAh) was 135 years when his father Terah died at Haran (i.e. 205-70 =135). It has also been stated that Abraham (pbAh) received his call to go to Canaan after the death of his father:

Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.¹⁹⁸

According to this, even if Abraham (pbAh) left Haran for Canaan immediately after the death of his father *he must have been at least 135 years of age*. Surprisingly, the following verse contradicts the above theme:

So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and *Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran* [stress added].¹⁹⁹

As such, if Terah lived for 205 years (Gen. 11:32) then either Abraham (pbAh) was 135 years when he left Haran for Canaan or alternatively his father Terah had to live and die a lonely death about 60 years after Abraham's departure from Haran. Different expositors and apologists have made futile attempts to reconcile the account. Matthew Poole has proffered the following apology in this regard:

i.e. Began to beget, as Gen. v. 32. Abram, who is first named in order of dignity, (for which cause Shem is put before Ham and Japheth, and Moses before Aaron,) not in order of time, which seems to be this: Haran probably was the eldest, because Nahor

¹⁹⁷ Gen 11:31-32 KJV.

¹⁹⁸ Act: 7:4.

¹⁹⁹ Gen. 12:4 KJV.

married his daughter; Nahor, the second; and Abram certainly was the youngest, because Terah, Abram's father, lived two hundred and five years, ver. 32, and Abram after his father's death, Acts vii. 4, went out of Haran, when he was seventy-five years old, Gen. xii. 4, 5; therefore he was not begotten in Terah's seventieth year, when Terah began to beget his sons, as here is said, but in his one hundred and thirtieth year, and so there remains seventy five years precisely to Abram's departure. And Sarai, Haran's daughter, was but ten years younger than Abram, Gen. xvii. 17; and therefore Haran was Abram's elder brother.²⁰⁰

In his eagerness to prove his contention, Matthew Poole did not mind contradicting Gen. 11:26 which explicitly asserts that Terah was 70 years when he begot Abraham (pbAh). His apology, therefore, has created more problems than it aimed to solve. Anyhow, there is hardly any doubt that Matthew Poole and other expositors of the Bible have miserably failed to justify the mistake. Such conflicting accounts cannot, therefore, be taken as revelation from the Lord. It can definitely be ascribed to some human redactor.

b) Age difference between Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh) and Sarah

Chronologies provided by various exegetes, expositors and interpreters of the Bible do not agree with each other. We, therefore, have no authentic information about the actual dates of various events including the birth and death of the most important personalities mentioned in the Bible. One of such chronologies²⁰¹ records following information about Abraham (pbAh) family.

²⁰⁰ Matthew Poole, *A Com. On the H. B.* (London W.1: The Banner of Truth Trust 78 B, Chiltern Street, 1962), 1:30.

²⁰¹ Dr. R. C. Wetzell, *A Chronology of Biblical Christianity* (Books for the Ages, Ages Software. Albany or USA Version 1.0 c 1997).

Abraham was born in the year	1967 B.C.
Sarah was born in the year	1957 B.C.
(hence she was 10 years younger to him)	
Terah moved from Ur to Haran	1927 B.C.
(Abraham then was 40 years old)	
Abraham left Haran for Canaan	1892 B.C.
(Abraham's age was 75 years)	
Abraham and Lot Separate	1889 B.C.
Lot was captured and rescued	1884 B.C.
Ishmael was Born (<i>Abraham 86 years</i>)	1881 B.C.
Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed	1868 B.C.
(Abraham 99 years)	
Isaac was born	1867 B.C.

This shows that Abraham (pbAh) was 40 years old when Terah took him along from Ur to Haran. Sarah, being 10 years younger than Abraham (pbAh), was about 30 years at that time. According to the Bible, Haran father of Lot, Milcah and Iscah was the youngest brother of Abraham. He, therefore, might have been 3 to 5 years younger than Abraham. Gen 11:28 carefully avoids to tell us at what age he died. May be he died much before attaining the age of marriage and without leaving any wife or children. There is no mention of his marriage nor name of his wife has been given. Even if he died a year or more before the departure of Terah family to Haran, there seems no likelihood that he had 3 children among whom Lot had been mentioned prior to Sarah.

And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land

of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.²⁰²

Lot (pbAh), therefore, seems to be older than Sarah excelling in significance over her. He could not, therefore, be an infant or the son of the youngest brother of Abraham (pbAh) as asserted by the Bible. The Qur'ān, too, shows Lot (pbAh) as an independent man having his own household which he opted to leave in the way of the Lord and to lend support to the faith and mission of Abraham (pbAh). The Qur'ān states that:

فَأَمَرَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.²⁰³

But Lut had faith in Him: He said: 'I will leave home for the sake of my Lord: for He is Exalted in Might, and Wise.'²⁰⁴

Even if it be presumed that Lot (pbAh) was a child when Abraham (pbAh) was leaving Ur he could not have uttered the words as quoted by the Qur'ān. Such a statement can only be made by an independent, adult person of some importance. The Qur'ān specifically refers to him as the first Muslim believing in Abraham (pbAh). This coupled with Lot's emphatic declaration to leave home as stated earlier suggests that Lot (pbAh) was neither a child nor a dependant on Abraham (pbAh). Since the Qur'ān has specifically mentioned Lot (pbAh) saying, 'I will leave home for the sake of my Lord', therefore, it indicates that Lot (pbAh) was already married and having an independent house of his own. It also points out that Lot's motive to leave home was only for the sake of his Lord and for nothing else. This shows Lot's extreme devotedness to the Lord. Even Abraham's position in this respect was somewhat different from Lot (pbAh) because he was most probably putting up with his father and had no

²⁰² Gen 11:31 KJV.

²⁰³ Al- Qur'ān, 29:26.

²⁰⁴ Al- Qur'ān, 29:26 (Yusuf Ali).

independent household in Ur. The narrative about his contention with his father also alludes to the same.

يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا. قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ أَنْتَ عَنْ آلِهَتِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِي مَلِيًّا.

'O my father! I fear lest a Penalty afflict thee from (Allah) Most Gracious, so that thou become to Satan a friend.' (The father) replied: 'Dost thou hate my gods, O Abraham? If thou forbear not, I will indeed stone thee: Now get away from me for a good long while!'²⁰⁵

This shows that Abraham (pbAh) stood expelled from his nativity and the house of his father only due to his preaching 'to worship no one except the one and the only Lord God of the universe'. The authors of the Bible give us only a conjectural account of Abraham's departure from Ur. They tell us that it was Terah who took the initiative to leave Ur for Haran with Abraham (pbAh) and others. What prompted Terah to leave his homeland has nowhere been explained. The Qur'ān, however, reveals the true background compelling Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) to leave their nativity for some other place to which the Lord might guide them. While leaving Ur, therefore, Abraham (pbAh) said:

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ.²⁰⁶

I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me!

This reveals that due to ever-increasing hostility between Abraham (pbAh) and the people of Ur, both Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) had to leave Ur for the sake of the Lord. They, therefore, left Ur without any allurement or promise of land or descendants as

²⁰⁵ Al- Qur'ān, 19:45-46. (Yusuf Ali)

²⁰⁶ Al-Qur'ān, 37:99.

asserted by the Bible.²⁰⁷ God also reveals about Abraham (pbAh) that:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ²⁰⁸

But We delivered him and Lut (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for the nations.²⁰⁹

This again testifies that Lot (pbAh) was a mature and significant person at the time Abraham (pbAh) was leaving Ur for Canaan. Had Lot (pbAh) been an infant, there would have been no need to make any specific mention of his faith or about his option to leave home. Similarly, if Lot (pbAh) was a mere dependent on Abraham (pbAh), it was useless to mention him as a colleague or co-equal companion of Abraham (pbAh) whom the Lord delivered from the distress at Ur and directed him and Abraham towards the land the Lord had blessed for the nations. The Qur'ān, therefore, mentions no promise to give possession of any specific land to Abraham (pbAh) or to Lot (pbAh). As such, we feel that the Israelites' attempt to claim exclusive right on the said lands has no support from the word of God because both Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) were sent towards that land which has been entrusted with the blessings not only for the Israelites but for all the nations of the world.

Gen 11:29 provides only the names of Sarah and Milcah as the wives of Abraham (pbAh) and Nahor respectively. It gives no name of the father of Sarah who seems to be camouflaged under pseudonym Iscah.

No reason has been given why Nahor and Milcah did not accompany Terah to Haran. Subsequently, however, they were

²⁰⁷ Gen. 12:1-2, 7 and 17:8 etc.

²⁰⁸ Al- Qur'ān, 21:71.

²⁰⁹ Al- Qur'ān, 21:71.

found in that area when Abraham (pbAh) sent his servant to them to seek a wife for Isaac (pbAh).²¹⁰ His descendants were in the same vicinity when Jacob (pbAh) after fleeing from his brother Esau took refuge with Laban the grandson of Nahor.²¹¹

That Lot (pbAh) was neither a nephew of Abraham (pbAh) nor much younger than him in age is suggested both by the Bible as well as the Qur'ān. Abraham (pbAh) was about 99 years when the angels came to him with the glad tidings about the birth of Isaac (pbAh). Sarah, then, was about 89 years and very old²¹². According to the Qur'ān Sarah describes herself as 'عجوز عقيم'²¹³, which means 'an old barren woman'. After visiting Abraham (pbAh), the angels went straight to Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed all the inhabitants of the twin cities but saved the entire household of Lot (pbAh), except his wife whom the Qur'ān described twice as 'عجوزا فى الغابرين'²¹⁴, i.e. 'an old woman who remained behind'. The Qur'ān has, therefore, stressed twice the factor of the old age of Lot's wife using the same word 'عجوز' as used for Sarah who was 89 years of age. All this suggests that the age of Lot's wife was similar to the age of Sarah. Normally, men marry women of lesser age as compared to their own. If so, Lot (pbAh) might have been older than his wife and also perhaps older than Sarah, his sister.

The Genesis mentioned Lot (pbAh) as son of Haran²¹⁵ before mentioning his daughters Milcah and Iscah²¹⁶. We also observe

²¹⁰ Gen 24:10.

²¹¹ Gen 29:4-30.

²¹² Gen. 18:11.

²¹³ 51:29.

²¹⁴ The Qur'ān 26:171 and 37:135.

²¹⁵ Gen. 11:27: 'These are the descendants of Terah, who was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot'

that Jewish authorities identify Iscah as Sarah. The aforesaid order of mentioning the descendants of Haran, therefore, suggests that Lot (pbAh) was the elder brother of Sarah (Iscah) and Milcah. Lot was a brother (cousin) of Abraham (pbAh), as asserted repeatedly by Genesis and even by Abraham (pbAh) himself.²¹⁷ This assertion from Abraham (pbAh) and the old age of Lot leaves no possibility of his being the nephew of Abraham (pbAh) or the son of Haran, the youngest brother of Abraham (pbAh) because in that case Lot (pbAh) should have been at least 45 years younger than Abraham (pbAh). Abraham (pbAh) himself was 40 years of age when they left Ur for Haran. Lot (pbAh) being 45 years younger to him could not have been born till then. In such an event, he could not be mentioned prior to Sarah as we find in Gen 11:31. As against this, Lot (pbAh) was not only a mature person but an active supporter of Abraham (pbAh). After their stay for an unspecified period at Haran they moved to Canaan as described in the following:

And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.²¹⁸

We know that Sarah was barren. Hence, the souls they had gotten in Haran must be the sons and daughters of Lot who

²¹⁶ Gen. 11:29: 'Gen 11:29 Abram married Sarai, and Nahor married Milcah, the daughter of Haran, who was also the father of Iscah.'

²¹⁷ Gen 13:8: And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren (...). Gen 14:14: And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. Gen 14:16: And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people (KJV).

²¹⁸ Gen 12:5 KJV.

was a married person having his own household before going to Egypt and even on return to Canaan.

Had Lot (pbAh) been the son of the youngest brother of Abraham (pbAh), and about 45 years younger than him, there could be no truth in the statement of the Daughters of Lot that 'our father is old'²¹⁹ or his wife to be addressed as عجوز, i.e. very old woman. The author of the story of incest, therefore, had no incorrect assessment about the age of Lot (pbAh) because Lot (pbAh) might have been in his nineties at that time.

Alternatively, Had Lot (pbAh) been a nephew of Abraham (pbAh) and about 45 years younger than he, then Abraham (pbAh) and Sarai would have naturally preferred to adopt him as their heir. They could not do so simply because Lot (pbAh) was brother of Sarah and older than she. The circumstantial evidence, therefore, does not show Lot (pbAh) either in his early age nor a dependent on Abraham (pbAh). He was an aged man living independently with a large family of his own. Being close in age to Abraham (pbAh), therefore, he could be assumed more correctly as a cousin of Abraham (pbAh) rather than a nephew i.e. the son of the youngest brother of Abraham (pbAh). Lot, therefore, was not a dependent on Abraham (pbAh) but a person depicting prospering and flourishing trend in his family and the assets as endorsed by a prominent commentator of the Bible:

Though Abraham had yet no children, Lot had, and both their servants had children by their fellow servants born in their house which might well be numbered among Abram's and Lot's persons because they had an absolute dominion over them.²²⁰

The same is also affirmed in the Bible as under:

And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and

²¹⁹ Gen 19:31 KJV.

²²⁰ Matthew Poole's *Com. On the H. B.*, 1062, on Gen. 12:5.

tents.²²¹

Lot (pbAh), therefore, might have been a cousin of Abraham (pbAh) and perhaps a few years younger than he. He seems to be older than Sarah. As such, there could have been no possibility for Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah to adopt Lot (pbAh) as their heir. That's why Abraham (pbAh) submitted a complaint before the Lord:

And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and **the steward of my house is this Eliezer** of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.²²²

It transpires from the above that Lot (pbAh) was not a nephew of Abraham (pbAh). He was an aged man living separately from Abraham (pbAh) with his wife and other members of his family. Eliezer, a slave was, therefore, the appropriate choice for Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah to adopt as heir until the birth of Ishmael (pbAh), the first born of Abraham (pbAh).

c) Sarah: Terah's Daughter or his Daughter-in-Law?

The Genesis asserts:

And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai, his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.²²³

Sarah, therefore, has not been shown as daughter of Terah or a sister of Abraham (pbAh). It is, however, on record that:

²²¹ Gen 13:5.

²²² Gen. 15:2-3 KJV.

²²³ Gen 11:31 KJV.

And it came to pass, when he (Abraham) was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.²²⁴

This shows that it was Abraham (pbAh) who suggested Sarah to declare herself as sister of Abraham(pbAh). About 15 years after the said episode in Egypt, Abraham (pbAh) entered Gerar:

And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.²²⁵

It seems that Sarah remained with Abimelech for some time and stood released from him by direct intervention of the Lord.

And God said unto him (Abimelech) in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.²²⁶

God, therefore, affirms Sarah as wife rather than sister of Abraham (pbAh). Abimelech stood offended from the untruth of Abraham (pbAh) and denounced his cheating. To justify his assertion, therefore, Abraham (pbAh) declared that:

And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother²²⁷ [stress added]; and she

²²⁴ Gen 12:11-13 KJV.

²²⁵ 20:2 KJV.

²²⁶ Gen 20:6-7 KJV.

²²⁷ Isn't it an incest to have intercourse with one's half sister (step-sister) and have her as one's wife; and is it like a prophet of Abraham's stature to commit such a shameful act? Can the book which records such a shameful

became my wife.²²⁸

So this is how Sarah became the sister of Abraham (pbAh) and the daughter of Terah.

The Jewish as well as the Christians scholars have not yet been able to remove the confusion whether Sarah was Terah's daughter or his daughter-in-law²²⁹. In case Sarah was Terah's daughter²³⁰, then why she was referred as his daughter-in-law. No canon of law allowed Abraham (pbAh) to marry his own sister instead of other women from his relatives or other families at Ur.

d) Willful Concealment of Facts

It is conspicuous to note that while mentioning the genealogies, the authors of the Bible had omitted the genealogies of Sarah. It was not without a purpose. Similarly, there must be a reason to split the account of the descendants of Haran. In Gen. 11:27 it is said that Haran, who died in Ur, was the father of Lot (pbAh). Milcah and Iscah, daughters of Haran, have been mentioned separately as under:

And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of

act on its pages, about a great prophet, be the word of God? It may be noted here that this heinous act is not permissible under the Law as below:

Do not have intercourse with your sister or your stepsister, whether or not she was brought up in the same house with you (...). Do not have intercourse with a half-sister; she, too, is your sister (Lev 18:9, 11 GNB, p.118).

²²⁸ Gen 20:12 KJV.

²²⁹ Gen 11:31 KJV.

²³⁰ Gen 20:12 KJV.

Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.²³¹

Perhaps in the earliest writings, this verse came to an end with the words 'the daughters ('daughterss'; and not the 'daughter') of Haran' (leaving away 'the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. '), which covered both Iscah (Sarah) and Milcah. The redactors have perhaps removed 's' from 'the daughters' and added the redundant and awkward phrases 'the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah' only to confuse the issue and to provide a cover to Sarah so that she might not be shown as the daughter of Haran and the sister of Lot (pbAh). Hence, the mentioning of Milcah and Iscah as the daughters of Haran, in an indirect manner, suggests that the author of the Genesis has consciously confused the fact that they were sisters of Lot (pbAh). Jewish scholars, however, identify Iscah as Sarah but except for Josephus, they do not acknowledge Lot (pbAh) as the brother of Sarah and Milcah. Factually, however, Sarah seems to be a sister of Lot (pbAh). She was the wife of Abraham (pbAh) and the grandmother of Jacob (Israel). Milcah was other sister of Lot (pbAh) who, too, was the grandmother of Jacob (pbAh) from maternal side because his mother, Rebecca, was the daughter of Milcah. We know that the Israelites had a prejudice against Lot (pbAh) and a prolonged enmity against the descendants of Lot (pbAh), i.e. Moabites and the Ammonites, due to which they developed a special distaste for them. It was due to their hostility against the Moabites and the Ammonites, the descendants of Lot (pbAh) that the composers of the Genesis tried to obliterate or conceal the true relation between Lot (pbAh), Sarah and Milcah.

Aside from Israel's prejudice against Lot (pbAh) and his descendants, as stated above, there was apparently another

²³¹ Gen 11:29 KJV.

reason to confuse the genealogies of Sarah and her relation with Lot (pbAh). The Genesis had asserted that Haran, the youngest brother of Abraham (pbAh) was the father of Lot (pbAh)²³². Lot (pbAh), therefore, was a nephew of Abraham (pbAh) and grandson of Terah. Iscah, the daughter of Haran, has been identified as Sarah. If she was really the daughter of Haran, the youngest brother of Abraham (pbAh), then she should have been 45 to 50 years younger than Abraham (pbAh). This, however, would contradict the age difference of only 10 years between Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah as narrated in Gen. 17:17. It was, therefore, impossible for the authors of the Genesis to show Sarah as a daughter of Haran, the youngest brother of Abraham (pbAh) because she was only 10 years younger to him. The authors, therefore, avoided to give any genealogy of Sarah which cannot be ignored as an ordinary lapse on their part.

Let us believe that Sarah was the sister of Abraham (pbAh) being daughter of his father but not the daughter of his mother²³³. This, however, cannot be reconciled with Gen. 11:31, which clearly asserts Sarah as the wife of Abraham (pbAh), and the daughter-in-law of Terah. Had Sarah been the daughter of Terah, as asserted by Abraham (pbAh), then one fails to understand the reason as to why Terah did not mention Sarah with her true and ineradicable relation with him? What made Terah shy to admit the fact? No apologist has thrown any light on the same.

²³² Gen. 11:27.

²³³ Gen. 20:12.

e) Lot (pbAh) a Cousin of Abraham (pbAh), Brother of Sarah and Milchah

At this stage, it may also be useful to explore the true relation between Sarah, Lot (pbAh) and Abraham (pbAh). The Bible has reported Lot (pbAh) as a grandson of Terah. He has been shown as a nephew of Abraham (pbAh)²³⁴. Due to the said clear-cut assertions in the Genesis, most of the Muslims tend to believe the same. There are, however, reasons to doubt the veracity of Lot's relation with Abraham (pbAh) as referred to above.

At the time of the separation between Lot (pbAh) and Abraham (pbAh), the latter addresses Lot (pbAh) as his brother. He says to him, *'for we be brethren'* ²³⁵.

At another place, it has been recorded:

And when Abram heard that his brother [Lot] was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.²³⁶

The verses quoted above affirm Lot (pbAh) as Abraham's brother. The same relation of Abraham (pbAh) with Lot (pbAh) is confirmed again in the following:

And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.²³⁷

Lot (pbAh) was not a real brother of Abraham (pbAh). As such Abraham's addressing Lot (pbAh) as his brother may signify that Lot

²³⁴ Gen 11:31; also Gen 14:12, which reads as follows:

And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

²³⁵ Gen. 13:8 KJV.

²³⁶ Gen 14:14.

²³⁷ Gen 14:16 KJV.

(pbAh) was Abraham's cousin. The confusing statements of the Bible regarding Abraham's exact relationship with Lot (pbAh) may either be due to the redaction activity or due to the conscious efforts of the Israelites to humiliate their enemies such as Moabites and the Ammonites, alleging that Lot (pbAh) their ancestor was not only a morally depraved person but enjoyed inferior position as compared to Abraham (pbAh) the ancestor of the Israelites. The Israelites, therefore, try to show Lot (pbAh) as a hapless nephew of Abraham (pbAh) who was mean, selfish and inclined towards immoral acts. Whereas Abraham (pbAh) was a magnanimous person taking great pain to rear and rescue his orphan nephew, Lot (pbAh) was extremely selfish to choose better parts of land whose people were wicked and sinned against the Lord (Gen 13:8-13). Some other allegations against Lot (pbAh) have also been enumerated under our topic 'Moral uprightness of Lot (pbAh)'. Genesis has it that:

And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.²³⁸

It means that Lot (pbAh) was not saved due to any merit of his own but it was merely for the sake of Abraham (pbAh) that God saved him.

The enlightened scholarship today has identified different strands of the narratives in the Genesis during its composition and its modifications between 900 and 400 B.C. Everything unacceptable to the Israelites had to be changed to serve their interests. Lot (pbAh) may not have been the son of Abraham's youngest brother Haran, as stated by the Bible. It is more likely that he was the son of Haran a brother of Terah not mentioned

²³⁸ Gen 19:29 KJV.

by the Genesis. May be Terah's brother Haran died in his youth leaving Lot, Sarah, Milcah and a widow. To keep alive his name Terah might have named his youngest son after his deceased brother. Haran the son of Terah had died before Terah's departure to Ur. Scribes and priests recording the events of distant past might have got confused on the issue. Instead of describing Lot (pbAh), Sarah and Milcah as sons and daughters of Haran the brother of Terah, they depicted them as the sons and daughters of Haran the younger brother of Abraham (pbAh) and Nahor. It is, therefore, presumable that Lot (pbAh) was a cousin of Abraham (pbAh) and Nahor who married their cousins i.e. Sarah and Milcah exactly in accordance with the prevailing customs and the law of the Lord.

f) Haran, the Father of Lot (pbAh) and Sarah, was a Brother of Terah

It, therefore, appears that Haran the father of Lot (pbAh), Sarah and Milcah was a brother of Terah who died even before the birth of the youngest son of Terah, whom he named Haran to keep alive the name of his deceased brother. Earlier to that, Terah had already named his second son Nahor after the name of his father.

Nahor, father of Terah, also had other children²³⁹ but the authors of Genesis have again avoided to name them. It is, therefore, conceivable that Nahor had a son named Haran who was a brother of Terah and the father of Lot (pbAh), Sarah and Milcah. It is also conceivable that the said Haran, the uncle of Abraham (pbAh) had died after the birth of Lot (pbAh), Sarah and Milcah. After the death of his brother Haran, Terah might have

²³⁹ Gen. 11:24.

married the widow of his brother, Haran. If so, it would partly serve as an apology for Abraham's declaration that Sarah was the daughter of his father but not the daughter of his mother²⁴⁰. It can thus be appreciated that Sarah was not a sister but actually a cousin of Abraham (pbAh). She in fact was the daughter-in-law of Terah, as asserted in Gen. 11:31. Consequently, Milcah, the second daughter of Haran was also married to her cousin, Nahor, the brother of Abraham (pbAh). The story of Abraham's marrying his sister and Nahor's marrying his niece, therefore, has no plausibility in it.

Lot (pbAh) might have inherited the household of his father which he opted to leave for the sake of the Lord. As against this, the Qur'ān does not quote Abraham's declaration to leave his house simply because Terah was then the chief of his household and Abraham (pbAh) might have been putting up with his father till then.

We said earlier that the age of Lot (pbAh) was close to the age of Sarah. Our presumption gets support from the Holy Qur'ān which refers to the wife of Lot (pbAh) as an old woman twice, i.e. in 26:171 and 37:135. If Lot's wife was old at the time of the calamity, we can presume that Lot (pbAh) was somewhat older than her. Lot (pbAh), therefore, might have been in his nineties at the time of the catastrophe. Sarah, too, was about ninety years and 'vexed in age' when she was taken to the palace of Abimelech. Her chastity and Honor could, therefore, hardly be exchanged with wealth. Besides this Sarah then was in the family way and soon after her release from Abi Malech, Sarah gave birth to Isaac (pbAh). Abi Malech could himself observe the same leaving no necessity of God's intervention to tell him that

²⁴⁰ Gen. 20:12.

she was a married woman²⁴¹. We, therefore, find no truth in the filthy stories fabricated only to teach the Israelites to amass wealth by all means irrespective of the fact that they are morally permissible or not. Such stories, however, do not accord with the mission, the conduct and the nobility of the Patriarchs whom the Israelites have wrongly painted in accordance with the characteristics of the Israelites prevailing in the pre and post exilic period.

g) Marriage with Sister, Niece or a Cousin?

According to the Qur'ān, Abraham (pbAh) was made 'إمام الناس', i.e. 'leader of the humankind'. He, therefore, was a paragon of virtue, and a role model of righteous conduct to be imitated by all believers in the world. Abraham (pbAh) was, therefore, a yardstick of piety and obedience to the Lord as a standard to measure the conduct of all the people after him. As such, had it been permissible for Abraham (pbAh) to marry his own sister or for his brother to marry his niece, the same would have continued in all the three religions claiming Abraham (pbAh) as their father in faith. We, however, feel that the permission for inter-marriage between brother and sister or with one's niece stood annulled and withdrawn after the first two or three generations since Adam (pbAh). Even otherwise, there was no dearth of women in Ur and there was no compulsion for Abraham (pbAh) to commit such an act as to marry his own sister Sarah. Similarly, Nahor, too, was by no means obliged to marry his niece when such marriages were rare even among the pagans. We cannot, therefore, reconcile with the idea that Abraham (pbAh) or Nahor married the women which stood forbidden in all the three religions following the Abrahamic

²⁴¹ Gen 20:3.

faith, as can be appreciated from the following verses of the Bible:

Do not have intercourse with your sister or your stepsister, whether or not she was brought up in the same house with you. (...). Do not have intercourse with a half sister; she, too, is your sister. (...). Do not take your wife's sister as one of your wives, as long as your wife is living.²⁴²

h) Sarah or Iscah?

The Bible says, 'Haran was the father of Lot (pbAh)²⁴³. It is further told:

And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of *Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah* [stress added].²⁴⁴

It has been told that Abraham (pbAh) married Sarai, but the genealogies of Sarai have not been disclosed. Nahor married Milcah, the daughter of Haran. Haran was also the *father of Iscah*. The author avoids telling the readers that both Milcah

²⁴² Lev 18:9, 11, 18 GNB.

D R V 18:9 translates it as:

Lev 18:9 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy sister by father or by mother: whether born at home or abroad. (...). **18:11** Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, whom she bore to thy father: and who is thy sister.

KJV translates it as follows:

Lev 18:9 The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, *whether she be* born at home, or born abroad, *even* their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. (...). **18:11** The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she *is* thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

²⁴³ Gen. 11:27c.

²⁴⁴ Gen 11:29 KJV.

and Iscah were the sisters of Lot (pbAh), who too, was the son of Haran. A casual reader may fail to understand the importance of this disguise, but it strikes the mind of any vigilant reader to find another cover over the name 'Iscah'. The identity of Iscah has been disclosed by sources outside the Holy Book. A scholar explains:

(...), behold Milcah, she hath also borne children unto thy brother Nahor; as Sarah, supposed to be the same with Iscah, a daughter of Haran, had borne a son to him, and whom he had received again as from the dead; so Milcah, another daughter of Haran, had borne children to his brother Nahor.²⁴⁵

It is to be noted that the son alluded to as 'received again from the dead' was no one except Isaac (pbAh). According to Gen 22:1-19, Isaac (pbAh) was offered as a sacrifice to the Lord, but was saved because the Lord himself provided a lamb to be sacrificed in his place.

To identify Iscah as Sarah, it is told:

Sarah is identified with Iscah, the daughter of Abraham's brother, Haran (Gen. 11:29), and thus Abraham's niece. She was called Iscah because all gazed (sakkah, 'to look') at her beauty (Meg. 14a) which she retained throughout her journeys and even in her old age.²⁴⁶

Matthew Poole explains:

Iscah is either Sarai as Jews and many other think or rather another person.²⁴⁷

Josephus also asserts that Sarah has been concealed under the cover of Iscah:

Now Abraham had two brethren Nahor and Haran: of these Haran

²⁴⁵ John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, under Gen. 22:20.

²⁴⁶ *Enc. Judaica* (Gen. R. 40:4), 18:46, s.v. 'Sarah'.

²⁴⁷ Mathew Poole under Gen. 11:29.

left a son, Lot; as also Sarai and Milcah his daughters, and died among the Chaldeans, in a city of the Chaldeans called Ur; and his monument is shown to this day.²⁴⁸

All this shows that Lot (pbAh) was a brother of Sarah and also of Milcah, the great-great grand-mothers of the Israelites. It appears that the Israelites have consciously tried to conceal Sarah under the cover of Iscah with the purpose to obscure her as the real sister of Lot (pbAh). With the said confirmation, Lot (pbAh) could be counted among the ancestors of the Israelites from paternal side through Sarah while from maternal side through Milcah. In such a case, ascribing any illegitimacy to Moabites or the Ammonites by alleging moral depravity to Lot (pbAh) would have impaired the nobility and the superiority of the Israelites against the Moabites and the Ammonites. Since the ratification of Lot's relation with Sarah and Milcah was likely to debase the Israelites in the same manner as they intended to debase the Ammonites and the Moabites, therefore, they deliberately refrained from disclosing the actual genealogy of Sarah.

i) Laban, Son of Nahor or Bethuel?

When Abraham's servant went to Mesopotamia:

Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.²⁴⁹

About Rebecca it has been recorded:

And she said unto him, I *am* the daughter of Bethuel, the son of

²⁴⁸ Josephus, Ch. VI, p. 36.

²⁴⁹ Gen 24:15b KJV.

Milchah, which she bare unto Nahor.²⁵⁰

Abraham's servant further states;

And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter *art* thou? And she said, the daughter of *Bethuel, Nahor's son* [stress added], whom Milchah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.²⁵¹

And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto *Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian* [stress added], the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.²⁵²

The above excerpts show that Rebecca was the daughter of Bethuel who was the son of Nahor. Laban, brother of Rebecca, has also been mentioned as the son of Bethuel. But the following verses give a different picture:

And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel, his daughter cometh with the sheep.²⁵³

This statement contradicts Gen 22:20-23 which do not mention Laban among the eight sons of Nahor. It also contradicts Gen 24:15-20, 24:24 and 24:47 which show Rebecca as the daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor and Milchah. Gen 28:5 also shows Laban as the son of Bethuel and brother of Rebecca. As against this GNB records:

Abraham was Jacob's grandfather and Nahor was Laban's father.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Gen 24:24 KJV.

²⁵¹ Gen 24:47 KJV.

²⁵² Gen 28:5 KJV.

²⁵³ Gen 29:5-6 KJV.

²⁵⁴ Footnote to Gen 31:53, p. 37, GNB, 1980.

This shows that not only the composers were confused but even the expositors have not been able to resolve the confusion in the Genesis.

j) How Many Daughters Lot (pbAh) had?

Bible's statement about the number of the daughters of Lot (pbAh) is confusing one. Lot (pbAh) had said '*I have two daughters which are not known to man*'²⁵⁵. In addition to them, Lot (pbAh), perhaps also had at least two more daughters who were married in the town. It is on the record that he went unto his sons-in-law who had married his daughters²⁵⁶. Lot (pbAh), perhaps, had another daughter as quoted below:

Genesis Rabbah (1, 14) concludes that Lot had, at the time of the

²⁵⁵ Gen.19:8.

²⁵⁶ Gen. 19:14-15 (KJV):

And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

Dr. John Gill (1690-1772)'s *Exposition on the Entire Bible* Observes:

and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters: according to Aben Ezra, he had two other daughters that perished in Sodom, which he gathers from [Gen 19:15](#), 'which are here', as if he had some elsewhere; and so Jarchi says, he had two daughters married in the city. And the Jewish writers (q) speak of one of them, whose name was Pelothith, married to one of the grandees of Sodom: (...).

While explaining Gen_19:15 Henry asserts:

His daughters that were married perished with their unbelieving husbands; but those that continued with him were preserved with him.

The above excerpts clearly indicate that Lot (pbAh) had (not only two, but) at least four daughters at that time.

destruction of Sodom, four daughters, two married and two betrothed, and that the latter escaped with their father. But he had previously had a daughter named Pelotet, who was married to one of the inhabitants of Sodom. She secretly practiced hospitality, but being one day discovered by the people of Sodom, was sentenced to be burned. (Pirke R. El. i.e ; 'Sefer ha-Yashar.' 'Lek Leka' ed. Leghron p. 23a).²⁵⁷

This shows that Lot (pbAh) had five daughters. The Genesis, however, mentions no sons of Lot (pbAh) except those born through his incestuous relation with his daughters. It is in deed a false allegation and a willful perversion of facts. If, at all, Moab and Ammon were Lot's sons, they must have been borne legitimately through his wife. It is usual of the Israelites to concoct baseless allegations against their opponents and enjoy such pleasantries to puff up their sense of superiority by denouncing the ancestors of their opponents even if they be the Prophets of the Lord just as Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Ishmael (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh) or Jacob (pbAh) etc.

²⁵⁷ *The Jewish Enc.* 8:188.

Ch-6. Distortion of the Text

The destruction of all the people in the Jordan valley except Lot (pbAh) and his followers in itself is a clear cut proof that Lot (pbAh) was a Prophet and his followers being the righteous people deserved to be saved. Here again we find that the Lord had favored the descendants of Lot (pbAh) as He favored the descendants of Abraham (pbAh). The Israelites were, therefore, strictly forbidden to interfere in the lands that God had given in the possession of the Moabites and the Ammonites but they did not desist from the same and made several attempts to grab their lands and to eliminate them on one pretext or the other. It will also be useful to note that the Deuteronomy has nothing to say about the incest of Lot (pbAh) or God's dislike for the people of Moab and Ammon. Apparently, it was due to the purity of their blood that Lord declared them as the relatives of Israel. The Israelites were, therefore, forbidden to intervene in their possession. Later on, however, geopolitical rivalries between Israel and Moabites as well as with the Ammonites, kept them at daggers drawn with Israel for a long time. This was perhaps the cause that the Israelites have recorded a changed attitude of God towards them in Deu 23 as quoted below:

2) A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD. 3) An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD

for ever:²⁵⁸ 4) Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt;²⁵⁹ and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.²⁶⁰

It must be noted that Deu 23:2, above, contained only the commandment preventing the bastard to enter the congregation of the Lord even to his tenth generation. The commandment therefore is in accordance with the overall pattern of the divine law. It has a universal application and does not specify individual persons or names. Subsequently, perhaps due to ever increasing hostility of the Israelites against the Moabites and the Ammonites the Israelites condemned the latter to a disgrace. Since Deu 23:2-4 contradict the former commandments of the Lord, i.e. Deu 2:9 and 2:19 quoted earlier, therefore, either the commandments under Deu 2:9 and 2:19, prohibiting Israelites to distress or to contend with the Moabites are incorrect or the interpolated commandments, i.e. 23:3,4 debarring the Moabites from the congregation of the Lord are spurious additions in the Deu and an invention pertaining to a time after the reign of king David (pbAh) and Solomon (pbAh) and more probably of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah of the post-Exilic period.

²⁵⁸ In the phrase: 'even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever', there is self-contradiction. Either there should have been 'to their tenth generation' or 'for ever'. It would have been better to avoid the words 'for ever'.

²⁵⁹ Is it a sufficient reason to disallow the Moabites and the Ammonites to enter into the congregation of the LORD 'Because they met you [the Israelites] not with bread and with water in the way when ye [the Israelites] came forth out of Egypt'? It was their discretion to welcome someone or not. It seems as if God is favourably taking the side of the Israelites which is against the norms of impartial justice.

²⁶⁰ Deu. 23:2-4 KJV.

It is interesting to note here that after the general commandment for the bastards,²⁶¹ we find verse 3 and 4 naming specifically the Ammonites and the Moabites subjected to the said injunctions against the bastards. The reason for bracketing them with the bastards conflicts with the concept. Being bastard was not the cause of their ex-communication. In fact it was because:

They refused to provide you (Israelites) food and water when you were on your way to Egypt and they hired Balaam, son of Beor from the city of Pathor in Mesopotamia to curse you.²⁶²

This shows that the story of incest did not exist till then; otherwise, the same would have been referred as the real cause of putting the Moabites and the Ammonites together with the bastards. Actually, the Israelites felt extremely annoyed with the said nations due to which they imposed an embargo on them even stricter than the Lord had proposed for those who were bastards in the true sense of the word. Consequently, whereas the bastards were prohibited to enter into the congregation of the Lord only up to their tenth generation, the Moabites and the Ammonites stood excluded forever.

Keeping in view the general habit of the Israelites to distort the facts and to fabricate false allegations against their opponents, it can be safely assumed that Gen 23:3-4, quoted above, is a spurious addition in the text. It is also confirmed by the fact that these verses contradict the former commandment of the Lord, i.e. Deu. 2:9 and 2:19. Possibly Deu. 23:3-4 may have been inserted a long time after the reign of Solomon (pbAh). Had these commandments been already there, then Boaz²⁶³ would not

²⁶¹ Deu.23:2.

²⁶² Deu 23:4 GNB.

²⁶³ According to *Collins Gem Dic of the B.*, 1974, p. 73f 'Boaz' was:

A man of means who lived in Bethlehem. Related to Ruth's late husband,

have married Ruth²⁶⁴, because she was a Moabite descendant of Lot (pbAh), forbidden to the tenth generation not to enter into the congregation of the Lord.²⁶⁵ Boaz, therefore, could not have violated the prohibition nor the Israelites would have tolerated his marriage violating the law. Similarly, the same law should have forbidden Solomon (pbAh) to marry Naamah²⁶⁶, the Ammonitess, if the said commandments existed in the law. This suggests that the said verses had been inserted in the Deuteronomy long after the reign of King Solomon (pbAh) and perhaps during the period of Jeremiah or Ezra. Factually, there seems no possibility of the existence in the OT of both stories of incest, i.e. between Judah²⁶⁷ and Tamar²⁶⁸ and also between

he married her to offer her the security which the law encouraged, when a nearer kinsman than he refused to carry out the Heb. Custom of protecting a widow of a close relative in this way. Their son's son was Jesse, father of David, and from their line came Jesus (Ruth chs. 2-4; Matt. 1,5).

²⁶⁴ According to *Collins Gem Dic of the B.*, 507 'Ruth' was:

Moabite wife and widow of Mahlon, a Bethlehemite. He, with his father, mother and brother had been driven into Moab by famine. There he and the brother married, and, with the father, died. Ruth left Moab with her mother-in-law Naomi [Naomi was 'Wife of Elimelech who emigrated with her and his two sons to Moab. The sons married Moabite women, one of them being Ruth. When Elimelech and the sons died Naomi came home with Ruth' (ibid. p.410).] and came to Bethlehem. It was customary for a near kinsman to marry the widow of his kin. One relative turned Ruth down, but another, Boaz, married her. They were ancestors of David, and so of Jesus.

²⁶⁵ Deu 23:3.

²⁶⁶ 'Naamah' was the wife of Solomon and mother of Rehoboam.

²⁶⁷ *Collins Gem D.B.*, explains on p. 316:

'Judah' was the 4th son of Jacob and Leah, who married a Canaanite (Gen 35:23; 38:1-10). (...). From him sprang the tribe of Judah, which developed from his 3 sons and 2 grandsons (Num 26:19ff). (...). They were allocated the major part of S. Palestine, and tended later to separate themselves from the other tribes. David was a man of Judah, and though the clan had supported Saul, they were all in favour of their kith and kin being the next king. (...). The 10 tribes went their own way when David's son, Solomon, died and Judah, with Levi, became a separate nation which endured from c. 935 BC till c. 586 BC, being ruled by 19 kings, all of David's line.

Lot (pbAh) and his daughters till the end of the reign of Solomon (pbAh). Keeping in view Deu. 23:2, both Perez²⁶⁹ and Zerah²⁷⁰ were bastards²⁷¹ whose descendants had to be excluded from the people of God. As such, the Israelites would not have tolerated David (pbAh) or Solomon (pbAh) as their kings. Even subsequently, the ten northern tribes would have raised the question of ineligibility of Rehoboam²⁷² more than the heavy burden of

²⁶⁸ *Aids to Bible Understanding* (NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1971), explains on p. 1573 that 'Tamar' was:

Daughter-in-law of Jacob's son Judah. Tamar married Judah's first son Er, but Jehovah put Er to death for his wickedness, leaving Tamar a widow. She was then given Onan, but Jehovah put him to death for failure to perform brother-in-law marriage, and Tamar still remained a childless widow. Judah procrastinated in giving her his third son; so as to conceal her identity she disguised herself as a prostitute in order to get Judah himself to have relations with her, cleverly taking his seal ring, cord, and rod of security. When Judah learned that Tamar was pregnant, he at first wanted her (stoned and then) burned. But on learning that through her manoeuvring to get an heir he had become the father, Judah exclaimed, 'She is more righteous than I am.' In the difficult birth that followed, Tamar produced twins, Perez and Zerah (Gen 38:6030). The Messianic lineage is traced through her son Perez—Ruth 4:12, 18:22; 1Chron. 2:4; Matt 1:3.

²⁶⁹ *Aids to Bible Understanding* explains on p. 1286 about 'Perez':

One of the twin sons of Judah by his daughter-in-law Tamar. At birth, Perez' brother Zerah started to emerge first, but withdrew and Perez came out first, producing a perennial rupture of Tamar (Gen 38:24-30). (...). Perez and his own two sons, Hezron and Hamul, are listed among those of Jacob's lineage coming into Egypt, where all three became heads of individual families in Judah (Gen 48:8,12).

²⁷⁰ *Aids to Bible Understanding* explains on p. 1689 about 'Zerah':

A son of Judah and [his daughter-in-law] Tamar; twin brother of Perez (Gen 38:27-30). Zerah was one of those 'who came to Jacob into Egypt.' (Gen 46:12, 26). His five sons (1Chron 2:4, 6) grew into a Judean tribal family (Num 26:20).

²⁷¹ Gen 38:12-26.

²⁷² *Collins Gem D.B.*, explains about 'Rehoboam' on p. 497:

Son of Solomon and Naamah (1Kings 14:12). Under him Israel, the N kingdom, and Judah, the S kingdom, parted company (1Kings 12). Relations had been strained bet. the 2 for some time, but the rivalry was

tax.²⁷³ We, therefore, believe that no such accusation existed till the end of the reign of Solomon (pbAh) nor do we hear of the same till the end of the dynasty in about 587 B.C. The stories of incest, therefore, did not exist till long after the reign of King Solomon (pbAh).

Factually, the existence of the book of Law dates from the reign of King Josiah²⁷⁴ of Judah in about 622 BC. It is said that the same was discovered for the first time during repair of the temple. As such, the law prohibiting the Moabites and the Ammonites to enter into the congregation of the Lord was unknown for a considerable time before that date. In this respect, Jonathan Kirsch's remarks about the background of the

most bitter bet. Ephraim, the most powerful of the 10 tribes, and Judah. Rehoboam went to schechem in Ephraim to be crowned. He was asked to release the people from the forced labour imposed on them by Solomon. Discourteously and provocatively he refused. Israel thereupon decided to split away from Judah with their own king Jeroboam. During his reign Judah was invaded by the Egyptians (1Kings 14:26; 2 Chron. 12). He maintained a large and fruitful harem (2 Chron. 11:21) and after a reign of about 17 yrs. Died c. 915 BC, and was succeeded by Abijah.

²⁷³ 1Ki 12:1-19; 2Chr 10:1-19.

²⁷⁴ 2Ki. 22:8. *Collins Gem D.B.*, writes about 'Josiah' (p. 313):

The important man of this name is the king of Judah who succeeded his father Amon c. 638 BC, when he was only 8 yrs. old (2Kings 22:1). When he was 18 he ordered repairs to be made to the Temple which was in a dreadful condition owing to years of neglect. In the course of the repairs a book of instruction was found by Hilkiah the High Priest, who passed it on to Shaphan the King's secretary who read it to Josiah. It repeated laws, rules, regulations, and told of a way of life which Josiah had never heard of: the old days. He vowed reformation of himself and of the nation and prosecuted [or executed?] it with vigour. The book was the canonical Book of *Deuteronomy*, and prob. parts of the Pentateuch which had been lost or destroyed apart from this copy in the reign of Manasseh (2 Kings 21:16). All the paraphernalia of Baal worship was destroyed. (...). He gave [a] battle at Megiddo where he was mortally wounded. He died in Jerusalem, mourned by all, including Jeremiah. Although only 39 when he died he had ruled wisely and well, and his death was the beginning of the end for the nation.

story of incest and the habit of Israel to denounce their enemies may also be of some interest:

So some scholars suggest that the story of Lot and his daughters is intended by the biblical authors as a kind of 'black propaganda,' a scurrilous²⁷⁵ tale meant to dishonor the hated Ammonites and Moabites: a 'product of popular political wit,' explains one commentator, 'by which Israel tried to repay her occasionally powerful enemies (...) for everything she had suffered at their hands.' Elsewhere in the Bible, they point out, we find the Moabites and Ammonites singled out among the many adversaries of Israel as worthy of special contempt: the Bible decrees that the child of an intermarriage between an Israelite and an Edomite or Egyptian might be admitted to the nation of Israel 'in the third generation' but the offspring of a marriage with an Ammonite or a Moabite is to be permanently excluded (Deut. 23:2-4, 8-9).²⁷⁶

On examining the narrative of the incest and entire background of the event, we feel convinced that Gen. 19:29-38 were a later addition to the preliminary writing of the episode which obviously ended with Gen 19:28. Some eminent Christian scholars concede to that. Commenting on the conduct of the daughters of Lot (pbAh), it has been said:

'there is no hint of shame and desire for concealment'. They themselves give their sons the transparent names Moab, [from a father] and Ben-ammi, (son of my father's kins men) (...). Since Zoar was spared, it is curious that the women despaired of a non-incestuous union; 'the story may, therefore, have been originally independent of 1-28 and told of a catastrophe as universal as the flood'.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ 'Scurrilous' means: 'indecent; abusive'.

²⁷⁶ Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, p. 60.

²⁷⁷ *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, 1920, p.153.

Peake has, therefore, admitted that originally the story ended on Gen. 19:1-28 which implies that Gen. 19:29-38 containing the allegation of incest is a spurious addition in the text.

Another scholar while commenting on Gen. 19:29 has endorsed Peake's views in the following words:

29. An insertion from P, emphasizing that Lot was saved for Abraham's righteousness. P may have reduced the whole story to this brief summary.²⁷⁸

Rev. Dr. Samuel Rolles Driver, Regius Prof. of Heb. in the Univ. of Oxford, has written in his article on 'Lot':

Naturally, this narrative is not to be understood as a record of actual facts. (...). There was much rivalry and hostility between Israel and its trans-Jordonic neighbors, Moab and Ammon; it is also, as Dillm. has remarked, a probable inference from the present narrative that incestuous marriages, such as were viewed in Israel with abhorrence, were not uncommon among these two nations; and these feelings are reflected in the discreditable story of their origin, which the narrator has here preserved. 'It was the coarse humor of the people which put into word its aversion to Moab and Ammon by means of this narrative' (Dillm.).²⁷⁹

It can thus be appreciated that the worthy writer of the *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible* does not consider the incest story as a record of actual facts and it has been observed by him that the same is a product of rivalry and hostility between the Israelites and their rivals, i.e. the Moabites and the Ammonites.

Similarly, Rev. T. K. Cheyne, too, in his article on 'Lot' considers the incest story as a later insertion and declares it as an artificial product:

²⁷⁸ W K Lowther Clarke, *Concise Bible Com.* (London: 1952), Gen 19:29.

²⁷⁹ *A Dic. of the Bible*, Ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, 1904), 3:151f, s.v. 'Lot'.

The Moabites and Ammonites are called by two writers the b'ne Lot (EV 'children of Lot') Dt. 29:19 [*sic*; actually it should have been 2:9,19] Ps. 83:9 [8]; a legendary account of their origin is given in Gen. 19:30-38 (Cp Ammon, Moab). [*Here a new para starts*] In the latter story, the progenitor of Ammon and Moab appears as dwelling 'in the cave: or, more precisely, two parallel statements are made in vv 30a and 30b, 'he dwelt in the mountain' and 'he dwelt in the cave'. Hence, the question arises whether 'in the cave' may not be gloss on 'in the mountain' or rather perhaps on 'in a cave,' being altered into to suit a change in the context. (...).It would be somewhat hard to deny that the story in Gen. 19:30-38 was interwoven with the story of the destruction of Sodom by a later hand, and contrasts as strongly with the previous honorable mention of Lot, as the story of Noah's drunkenness Gen 9:21, contrasts with that of the reward of his righteousness.²⁸⁰

The same scholar has also referred to the confusion about the origin of Moabites and the Ammonites where it is said:

(...). (Of course the story in Gen 19:30-38 is neither of Moabitish and Ammonitish nor of primitive Hebrew origin; it is an artificial product, except in the one point of the tracing of the Moabites and Ammonites to Lot the Horite, which is due to misunderstanding). (Next para starts here). The secondary Lot is but a double of Abraham. Doubtless he shows differences from Abraham, which mar the portrait; but these are due to the unfavourable circumstances in which the biographer places Lot, and only prove that the narrator could not triumph over such great obstacles. Lot has therefore made but a slight mark on Hebrew literature (Dt. 2:9,19 and Ps. 83:9 [8] are both late). A reference is made in Lk. 17:29-32 both to Lot and to his wife, which remains morally effective even if the 'pillar of salt' (Gen. 19:26) is an accretion²⁸¹ on the original story (see Sodom). His function is to confirm the

²⁸⁰ *Enc. Biblica*, ed. T. K. Cheyne, etc. (London: Watts and Co., 1903), 3:2824, s.v. 'Lot'.

²⁸¹ 'Accretion' means: 'the growing of separate things into one or extraneous matter added to anything.'

belief that the ancestors of the Hebrews were not wild, self-seeking warriors, but men of piety and righteousness (cp 2 Pet. 2:7 f.).²⁸²

R. Lansing Hicks, Prof. of Literature and Interpretation of the OT, Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven, explains:

Although these popular ethnic etymologies are historically and linguistically unsatisfactory, they preserve a memory of intermarriage between ancestors of the Israelites and inhabitants of S Transjordan (cf. also Gen. 36{esp. vss. 20:30}; 1 Sam. 22:3-4; Ruth; see Moab; Ammon). The present form of the stories leaves no doubt as to Israel's feeling of superiority (cf. 1sa. 15-16; Jer. 48; Amos 2:1-3; Zeph 2:8-9)²⁸³

The worthy editors of *The New American Bible* have recorded a footnote to Gen 19:30-38. They have touched the theme authoritatively in a compact and concise manner. They observe that the purpose of Israelites telling the tale about their *racially related but rival nations was to ridicule them*. The reader would definitely appreciate the words of the scholarly note:

The Israelites' tale about the origin of Israel's neighbors east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea was told partly to ridicule these racially related but rival nations [stress added] and partly to give folk etymologies for their names.²⁸⁴

The *Jewish Enc* has afforded the following critical view:

Critical View: Lot is regarded by the critics as an eponym representing the supposed common ancestor of the two tribes or nations of Moab and Ammon. His relation to Abraham is in this view intended to mark the ethnographic connection of these two tribes with the Israelites; and his choice of an eastern location may be taken as indicating a voluntary relinquishment of all

²⁸² *Enc. Biblica* (1903), op. cit., 3: 2824f, s.v. 'Lot'.

²⁸³ *The Interpreter's DB*, 3:163, s.v. 'Lot'.

²⁸⁴ *The New American Bible*, footnote to Gen 19:30-38, p. 19.

claims of the Moabites and Ammonites to Canaan. His relations with his daughters probably represent some rough pleasantry common among the Israelitish folk and indicating their scorn for their nearest neighbors.²⁸⁵

Though this myth serves to vilify Israel's warlike south-eastern neighbours, the Moabites and Ammoites, as having been born in incest, it recalls the Ionian Greek myth of Adonis, or Tammuz, whose mother Smyrna had made her father, King Theias of Assyria, drunk and lain with him for twelve nights. It also reads as if iconotopically based on a familiar Egyptian scene; the ithyphallic Osiris lying dead in a grape arbour and mourned by the goddesses Isis and Nephtys, each with a son crouched at her feet. Moreover, the famous Moabite Stone (late ninth century BC), which records Mesha King of Moab's successful revolt against king Ahab, and his subsequent defeat of Ahab's son Jehoram (2 Kings 1:1 and 3:4ff), is written in language so close to Biblical Hebrew that the Israelites may, at one time, have read the names 'Of my Father' and 'Son of my Kinsman' as implying Moabite brotherhood and Ammonite cousinage with themselves.²⁸⁶

It transpires from the above scholarly comments that the Israelites have deliberately disgraced the Moabites and the Ammonites with a view to establish their superiority over them. On one side, they denounce the Moabites and the Ammonites by showing them as illegitimate descendants of Lot (pbAh) while on the other they admire the heroic act of the daughters of Lot (pbAh) because according to them, they had the good intentions of preserving the seed of their father. Even the Christians express similar views by praising the incest between Judah and Tamar. In that case, no blame has been put on Judah while the heroic act of Tamar has been admired on the basis of the

²⁸⁵ *Jewish Enc.*, 8:186, s.v. 'Lot'.

²⁸⁶ Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: the Book of Genesis* (Manchester M2 7AQ: Carcanet Press Ltd, Alliance House, Cross Street, 2005), p. 171,172.

maxim 'all is well that ends well'. Since the end result of the incest of Judah was the birth of Pharez, the great grand-father of King David (pbAh) and Solomon (pbAh), therefore, the incest deserves to be admired than to be despised. Ruth, the Moabiteess who seduced Boaz to marry her, was the great grand-mother of King David (pbAh) and Naamah, the Ammoniteess, was the wife of King Solomon (pbAh) of Judah. They all have to be revered. Similarly, the alleged incest of the daughters of Lot (pbAh) has to be looked upon with great reverence because they happen to be the great grand-mothers, not only of King David (pbAh) but also of the celebrated Messiah of both the Israelites as well as the Christians.

In view of all the above dissertation it serves no good purpose of the Israelites or the Christians to debase their own ancestors, especially when the allegations of illegitimacy against the Moabites and the Ammonites are entirely baseless. The Muslims believe that all the true Prophets of the Lord were righteous, blameless and blessed by the Lord. May God's blessings be on Lot (pbAh), his family and all his followers, who had been declared righteous by the Lord. May God also bless Adam (pbAh), Noah (pbAh) and all His other Prophets such as Abraham (pbAh), Ishmael (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh), David (pbAh), Solomon (pbAh), Jesus (pbAh) and others whose image stands distorted for thousands of years due to false and frivolous accusations of the Israelites.

Chapter-7

Ch-7. The Origin of the Moabites and the Ammonites

a) Prophets Lot (pbAh) and Abraham (pbAh)

According to the Bible, Lot (pbAh)²⁸⁷ was a grand son of Terah²⁸⁸. He was the son of Haran²⁸⁹, the youngest brother of Abraham (pbAh). It is said that Haran died at Ur before Terah had left the city of Ur in Babylonia to go to Haran. Lot, the nephew of Abraham (pbAh) and grandson of Terah, went with them. Lot (pbAh) was again with Abraham (pbAh) when he left Haran for Canaan. He also accompanied Abraham (pbAh) when he visited Egypt. On their return from Egypt, both Lot (pbAh) and Abraham

²⁸⁷ George R. Berry writes in *J. Hastings DB*, 1954, p. 554:

(...). The account of his life is contained in Gn 11²⁷⁻ 14¹⁶, 19. He was born in Ur, and went with Abraham to Haran, and thence to Canaan. He accompanied Abraham in much of his wandering. (...). *The story of the daughters of Lot (19³⁰⁻³⁸) is now usually considered to be not history, but a traditional account of the origin of the two nations, Moab and Ammon* [stress added]. The basis of the story is partly popular etymology of the two names; *while it is prompted chiefly by national rivalry and hostility* [stress added]. That Lot was a righteous man (2 P 2⁷⁻⁸) (...).

²⁸⁸ Gen. 11:31.

²⁸⁹ W. Smith writes in his *DB*, p.232 s.v. 'Haran':

The third son of Terah, and therefore the youngest brother of Abram. (Gen 11:26). Three children are ascribed to him — Lot, vs. 27, 31, and two daughters, viz., Milcah, who married her uncle Nahor, ver. 29, and Iscah, ver. 29. Haran was born in Ur of the Chaldees, and he died there while his father was still living.

(pbAh) had many sheep, goats, cattle and a good number of servants to look after their animals. Eventually, the paucity of the pasture land for their cattle did not allow them to stay together. To avoid quarrels between their herds-men, Abraham (pbAh) said to Lot (pbAh):

So let's separate. Choose any part of the land you want. You go one way, and I'll go the other²⁹⁰.

It is stated that Lot (pbAh) chose the well watered lands, i.e. the whole Jordan valley for himself and moved away towards the east.²⁹¹ The valley comprised of the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose people were very wicked and sinned against the Lord²⁹². These people indulged in homosexuality and committed other abominable transgressions against the commandments of the Lord. Eventually, the Lord along with two angels visited Abraham (pbAh), had a sumptuous lunch with him and gave glad tidings about the birth of Isaac (pbAh). Then the Lord also told Abraham (pbAh):

And the LORD said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; *I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it*,²⁹³ which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.²⁹⁴

Abraham (pbAh) tried to plead that the innocent people in the town might not be destroyed with the sinners. Ultimately, the Lord said to him, 'I will not destroy it if there are ten (innocent

²⁹⁰ Gen 13:9 GNB.

²⁹¹ Gen. 13:11.

²⁹² Gen 13:13.

²⁹³ It means that it was not an All-Knowing God but one who had to ascertain the facts through His personal visit to the cities. According to Gen it was second visit of God to earth to see the things for Himself. About His first visit it is said:

And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. (Gen 11:5)

²⁹⁴ Gen. 18:20-21 KJV.

people in the town)¹²⁹⁵. The Lord sent down two angels to the town. It is said that the angels went to Lot (pbAh) under the guise of young and handsome men whom Lot took to his house and served the meals. Meanwhile, a rowdy mob gathered round the house of Lot (pbAh) and tried to get hold of the men by force because they wanted to molest them. Eventually, due to the wickedness of the people, the angels of the Lord destroyed the valley and the twin cities by raining burning sulphur on them. The angels, however, rescued Lot (pbAh) along with his wife and two daughters from the town and forbade them to look back at the site of destruction. Neglecting the prohibition, Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.²⁹⁶ Lot (pbAh) along with his two daughters of marriageable age, went firstly to a small town named Zoar and from there they went up into the hills and lived there in a cave.

Further development has been recorded as below:

And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man on the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, so that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.²⁹⁷ And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve

²⁹⁵ Gen. 18:32b GNB.

²⁹⁶ Gen 19:26.

²⁹⁷ Drinking wine to such an extent that a person becomes unconscious is not desirable and is unbecoming esp. for a prophet (Eph 5:18). How can one reconcile with the idea that a great prophet of Lot's calibre could have allowed his daughters to accomplish their nefarious plan. Which religion or moral code permits incest to 'preserve seed'. Then there is another point to be considered. Is it possible that an unconscious man can practice sex while remaining unconscious throughout the process?

seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus, were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.²⁹⁸ And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day²⁹⁹.

The story as narrated above portrays the Moabites and the Ammonites as the illegitimate sons of Lot (pbAh). They were allegedly born of the incest between Lot (pbAh) and his daughters. This portrays Lot (pbAh) as well as his daughters as most heinous sinners against the Lord, and Moab and Ammon as his illegitimate sons.

b) Hostility Leads to Accusation

The study of the Bible and the history of the Israelites, however, reveals that most of the stories in the OT, denouncing other nations, are factually wrong. The purpose of such stories is not to relate facts but to humiliate the enemies of the Israelites. A close examination of the accusation, the circumstantial as well as historical evidence disproves such condemnation and there is nothing but rivalry or hostility of the Israelites against others being the main cause of the depravity attributed to the opponents of the Israelites. Similarly, it was the same animosity against the Moabites and the Ammonites protracting from the time of Exodus to about 400 B.C., which found its expression in the fabrication of false and frivolous story of incest against Lot (pbAh) and his daughters. Hence, it was the antagonism of the Israelites against these nations which led to blemish the luminous character of Lot

²⁹⁸ This unnecessary parenthetical remark shows the poisonous malignancy of the author or redactor of the book.

²⁹⁹ Gen 19:31-38 KJV.

(pbAh), one of the greatest messengers of the Lord besides being one of the ancestors of the Israelites. Factually, the story of incest is incredible as already elucidated with reference to some of the renowned biblical scholars.

According to the Bible the descendants of Moab were known as Moabites who possessed the entire land of Moab at the time of the Exodus of Israel. Similarly, the descendants of his brother Ammon were called Ammonites who possessed the lands of Zamzummim between the Ammon and Jabbok³⁰⁰ rivers. Both the Moabites and the Ammonites joined hands in hiring Balaam, the son of Beor, to curse Israel when they approached the said lands. Later on, in the days of Jehoshaphat³⁰¹, the Ammonites joined the Moabites and the Edomites in a raid on Judah³⁰². In about 830 BC, Zabad and Jehozabad, both sons of an Ammonitess conspired to slay Joash³⁰³, the king of Judah³⁰⁴. In the post exilic period, Tobiah, the governor of Ammon hindered the building up of the city walls of Jerusalem and the temple by Nehemiah³⁰⁵. Such and other animosities of the Moabites and the Ammonites led Ezra and Nehemiah to censure intermarriage between the Jews and the Ammonites. In the post exilic period, the Ammonites also fought with Judah Maccabaeus³⁰⁶. Josephus says:

And they bear sons; the son of the elder was named Moab, which denotes one derived from his father. The younger bear Ammon which name one derived from a kinsman. The former of whom was the father of the Moabites, which is even still a great nation;

³⁰⁰ A brook or small river, an eastern tributary of the Jordan. It constituted the northern boundary line of the Ammonite territory.

³⁰¹ King of Judah 870-848 B.C.

³⁰² 2Ch. 20:1-30.

³⁰³ 835-796 B.C.

³⁰⁴ 2Ch. 24:26.

³⁰⁵ Neh 2:10-19, 4:3-7.

³⁰⁶ 1Macc 5:6.

the latter was the father of the Ammonites: and both of them are inhabitants of Cele-Syria. And such was the departure of Lot from among the Sodomites³⁰⁷.

In fact, there are many other narratives about continuing hostility of Moabites and the Ammonites against the Israelites but even the facts mentioned above are enough to highlight the animosity of the Israelites against the descendants of Lot (pbAh), i.e. the Moabites and the Ammonites.

On analyzing the narrative of incest, examining the circumstantial evidence and keeping in view the long lasting feud of the Israelites with the said nations starting from the Exodus to the reign of Judah Macabaeus, it becomes clear that the story of incest can neither be a history nor a revelation from the Lord. In fact the said allegation was concocted merely to humiliate the Moabites and the Ammonites by propagating them as illegitimate descendants of Lot (pbAh), to denounce the said nations and also to disqualify them from claiming any parity with Israel, especially in respect of rights on the Promised Land.

c) The Ancient Grudge

The Israelites also had another cause of hatred and grudge against Lot (pbAh). It has been stated that when Lot (pbAh) separated from Abraham (pbAh) he chose for himself the fertile land which had plenty of water like Garden of Eden³⁰⁸. Due to it, Lot (pbAh) became a '*persona non grata*' for the Israelites and they as well as the Christians spared no chance to malign him.

In spite of the closest relationship of Lot (pbAh) with Abraham (pbAh), the Israelites continued to black-paint Lot (pbAh) to contrast him with Abraham (pbAh). It is said that Abraham (pbAh)

³⁰⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 1, Ch. 11, p. 42.

³⁰⁸ Gen 13:10.

accepted Lot (pbAh) into the fold of his family in accordance with his patriarchal responsibility to the son of his deceased brother.³⁰⁹ Biblical narrative contrasts Abraham's benevolence to Lot's self-interest and also points out that Lot (pbAh) chose to reside with the people of Sodom who were very wicked sinners against the Lord.³¹⁰ Genesis also asserts that Lot (pbAh) was saved not due to his own virtue but for the sake of Abraham (pbAh).³¹¹ The Bible has many such instances where individuals can get good rewards on behalf of others while on other occasions they can transfer their guilt to the innocent one. Punishing one for the fault of another and saving others for the goodness of a particular person is the constant theme of the Bible. God curses the ground for the sin of Adam (pbAh).

And he said to the man, You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you.³¹²

In the case of naked Noah (pbAh), we find that Noah (pbAh) Himself or Ham was to blame. Surprisingly, Canaan is cursed for the fault of Noah (pbAh) and Ham.

According to Paul, all the descendants of Adam (pbAh) became infected due to the sin of Adam (pbAh) and became sinners while if they believe in Jesus Christ (pbAh) as the saviour Lord, he will take on him all the sins of the humankind.

Perhaps the main offence of Lot (pbAh) was his choosing the so-called fertile land of Sodom and Gomorrah at the time of his separation from Abraham (pbAh). The Jews, therefore, continued to avenge themselves by maligning Lot (pbAh) as follows:

³⁰⁹ Gen 12:4.

³¹⁰ Gen. 13:13.

³¹¹ Gen 19:29.

³¹² Gen 3:17; 9:22-28.

When, however, he separated himself from Abraham, he at the same time separated himself from God (Gen. R. 41:5-7). He chose to settle in Sodom because of his lustful desires (ibid.). There he became a usurer (51:6). He was appointed head of the local tribunal (50:3), according to some, because he was the worst of all the five judges there (Tanh. B, Va Yera 21). Although Lot owed his deliverance from Sodom to Abraham's intercession (Mid. Hag. To Gen. 13:11), it was also his reward for not having betrayed Abraham in Egypt when he said that Sarah was his sister (Gen. R. 51:6). A greater reward, however, is that the Messiah will be descended from him through Ruth the Moabite and Naamah the Ammonite (see Gen. R. 51:8 and Naz. 23b-24a).³¹³

The Jewish Enc. goes a step further to tell us that:

When the quarrel arose between his [Lot's] shepherds and those of Abraham (Gen 13:7), there was a quarrel between Abraham and Lot also. The later sent his flocks to graze in the fields that did not belong to him, and when Abraham, induced by the complaints of the wronged owners, remonstrated, Lot showed himself rebellious (...). Lot, while separating himself from Abraham, separated himself from God also, saying, 'I have no desire either in Abraham or in his God' (Gen R. xli. 9-10). (...). Lot was given over to lust; therefore he chose Sodom as his residence (...), and his daughters' act of incest was due to his neglect. (...) that Lot was not too conscientious; he was besides very greedy of wealth; and at Sodom he practiced usury (Gen. R. li. 8). His hesitation to leave the city was due his regret for his great wealth which he was obliged to abandon. The Rabbis cited the drunkenness of Lot as an example of the degree of intoxication which renders a man irresponsible. All the special favors which Lot received from God were granted through the merit of Abraham; otherwise he would have perished with the people of Sodom (Gen. R. xli. 4; Mid. etc.).³¹⁴

³¹³ *Enc. Judaica*, 13:216.

³¹⁴ *The Jewish Enc.* 8:185-186.

The cause of separation between Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) is a conjectural construction of the text in the absence of any reliable information or record with the Israel to show the true cause of separation between Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh). Since the Israelites were used to giving a materialistic interpretation to everything in their history, therefore, they failed to perceive any higher purpose of the Patriarchs, for which they left Ur, Haran, Canaan and other places to visit unfamiliar lands and to confront with strange people there.

Since the composition of Genesis cannot be traced earlier than the reign of King Solomon (pbAh),³¹⁵ therefore, even the earliest writings in the Genesis might have been recorded about eight centuries after the death of Abraham (pbAh) or Lot (pbAh). They tailored the characters of the patriarchs suited to their own designs and desires. Although the enmity between the Israelites and the earliest settlers in and around Canaan had started from the time of Exodus, i.e. about three centuries before the reign of Solomon (pbAh), yet they continued to increase day by day and persisted till the conquest of Judea by the Romans in about 64 B.C. During the post-exilic period, there was acute racial awareness leading to separatist policy and hatred against all other nations in the region. The Israelites, therefore, made conscious efforts to assert their superiority over other nations by denouncing them through one excuse or the other.

The story of Abraham's offer allowing Lot (pbAh) to choose between the lands, if any, was not a choice out of anything possessed either by Abraham (pbAh) or Lot (pbAh). It was simply a choice of direction as stated below:

And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee?

³¹⁵ Ca. 985-945 BC.

Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.³¹⁶

In view of the above, the grudge of the Israelites that Lot (pbAh) greedily chose the best part of the Land is baseless. None of them had ever been to that land before it nor had anyone surrendered to the other something that belonged to him. Modern scholars, therefore, differ from the traditional view of the magnanimity of Abraham about the aforestated offer of choice and also about rescue of Lot by him (Gen Ch 14).

This story offers an intentional contrast between Abram's magnanimity and Lot's self-interest; and its closing words form both a judgment upon Lot and a connecting link with ch. 19, the second unit in the Lot tradition: 'Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against Yahweh' (13:13). (...). Also this capture brings Abram out into the international scene, dramatizing him as a military hero and a saviour of his people.³¹⁷

Factually, the story of Lot's having so many animals seems to be an assumption without a proof. There is nothing to support the assertion that Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) had animals in such a large number that the entire land of Canaan was inadequate to graze them. Similarly, it is naïve to suppose that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had no objection to welcome a foreigner like Lot (pbAh) with large number of animals to enjoy free-hold grazing rights on their pasture lands. They could not have surrendered their rights to graze their own animals on pasture lands and meadows.

Abraham (pbAh) was a learned man of sagacity and was brought up in an environment of flourishing trade and industry around him. Lot (pbAh), too, had the same background. Throughout their lives

³¹⁶ Gen 13:8, 9 KJV.

³¹⁷ *Interpreter's Dic. of The Bible*, p. 163.

they traveled along the main trade routes in the region and encamped along the same. It is said that

About this time the Sodomites grew proud on account of their riches and great wealth; they became unjust towards men, and impious towards God, insomuch that they did not call to mind the advantages they received from Him; they hated strangers, and abused themselves with sodomitical practices. God was therefore much displeased at them, and determined to punish them for their pride, and to overthrow their cities, and to lay waste their country, until there should neither plant nor fruit grow out of it.³¹⁸.

Their pride was due to the fact that the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were on the main trade routes as also narrated by the Qur'ān 'And the (cities were) right on the high-road'³¹⁹. As such, those cities were commercial centers situated between Arabia and Syria. We can, therefore, presume that Lot (pbAh) was a merchant earning his living from trade. If so, it was but natural for him to reside inside the walls of the city as also asserted by the Genesis.

In view of all this, we can't think that Lot (pbAh), the Messenger of the Lord, had gone to the Jordan valley only to graze his animals; whereas in fact, it was to preach the word of God to the people as revealed by the Qur'ān. The Israelites, however, do not acknowledge Lot (pbAh) as a Messenger or a Prophet nor do they know that the Lord had sent him to Sodom and Gomorrah with the special mission to warn the people against the dire consequences of their sinful deeds.

A careful study of the Genesis reveals that the Israelites factually knew nothing about the life, the time, the preaching of faith and the missionary efforts of Abraham (pbAh) or Lot (pbAh). They might have some traditions of Moses (pbAh) that form the

³¹⁸ Flavious Josephus Book 1, Ch. 11:1, 1852, p. 41.

³¹⁹ Al-Qur'ān 15:76.

nucleus which they expanded and expounded by their own conjectural contribution to build up the biographies of Lot (pbAh) as well as Abraham (pbAh). Since most of such writings pertain to the period of exile or thereafter, therefore, they seem to have been written keeping in view the cause of Israel. The story quoted below is therefore an example of the same:

Four kings, Amraphel of Babylonia, Arioch of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer of Elam, and Tidal of Goiim, went to war against five other kings: Bera of Sodom, Birsha of Gomorrah, Shinab of Admah, Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (or Zoar). These five kings had formed an alliance and joined forces in Siddim Valley, which is now the Dead Sea. They had been under the control of Chedorlaomer for twelve years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and his allies came with their armies and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in the plain of Kiriathaim, and the Horites in the mountains of Edom, pursuing them as far as Elparan on the edge of the desert. Then they turned around and came back to Kadesh (then known as Enmishpat). They conquered all the land of the Amalekites and defeated the Amorites who lived in Hazazon Tamar. Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela drew up their armies for battle in Siddim Valley and fought against the kings of Elam, Goiim, Babylonia, and Ellasar, five kings against four. The valley was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah tried to run away from the battle, they fell into the pits; but the other three kings escaped to the mountains. The four kings took everything in Sodom and Gomorrah, including the food, and went away. Lot, Abram's nephew, was living in Sodom, so they took him and all his possessions. But a man escaped and reported all this to Abram, the Hebrew, who was living near the sacred trees belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his brothers Eshcol and Aner were Abram's allies. When Abram heard that his nephew had been captured, he called together all the fighting men in his camp, 318 in all, and pursued the four kings all the way to Dan. There he divided his men into groups,

attacked the enemy by night, and defeated them. He chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus, and got back all the loot that had been taken. He also brought back his nephew Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other prisoners. (...). The king of Sodom said to Abram, 'Keep the loot, but give me back all my people.' Abram answered, 'I solemnly swear before the LORD, the Most High God, Maker of heaven and earth, that I will not keep anything of yours, not even a thread or a sandal strap. Then you can never say, 'I am the one who made Abram rich.' I will take nothing for myself. I will accept only what my men have used. But let my allies, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, take their share.'³²⁰

It shows that the long story quoted above is nothing but a pure fabrication by the Israelites. Earlier to that Genesis had depicted Abraham (pbAh) as a deceitful liar, timid and greedy person acquiring wealth in shameful exchange of the chastity and nobility of Sarah with the King of Egypt.³²¹ Subsequent to the narrative quoted above we again find a similar exchange of wealth against sale out of Sarah to King Abimelech of Gerar with an extremely greedy and cowardly posture of Abraham (pbAh).³²² Strange enough that Sarah's age at the time of the second episode was 89 years and she was already pregnant with Isaac, who was born soon after her release from Abi Melech. It was therefore perhaps in the post-exilic period that the Israelites felt the need to illuminate the figure of Abraham (pbAh) blackened by their own hands, through the fiction depicting Abraham (pbAh) as a brave hero, champion military chief, and magnanimous person not accepting from king of Sodom even well deserved share out of the loot recovered from the Kings defeated by Abraham (pbAh). The enlightened scholarship today denies veracity of the baseless insertion in the Genesis.

Herman Gunkel observes:

³²⁰ Gen 14:1-16, 21-24 GNB.

³²¹ Gen 12:10-20.

³²² Gen 20:1-18.

Now when creation has widened so mightily in our view, when we see that the People of Israel is one of the youngest in the group to which it belongs, there is an end of all such conjectures. Between the origin of the primitive races of southwestern Asia and the appearance of the people of Israel upon the stage of life had rolled unnumbered millenniums; hence there is no room for serious discussion over historical traditions said to be possessed by Israel regarding those primitive times.³²³

About Abraham's victory over the four kings it has been said:

And however cautious the modern historian may be in declaring anything impossible, he may declare with all confidence that animals-serpents and she asses, for instance-do not speak and never have spoken, that there is no tree whose fruit confers immortality or knowledge, that angels and men do not have carnal connexion, and that a world-conquering army cannot be defeated-as Gen xiv declares-with three hundred and eighteen men.³²⁴

7th Day Adventist BD explains:

None of the kings mentioned in the narrative can be identified with monarchs known from secular sources (see Chedorlamer; Amraphel; Arioch; Tidal); however, archeological evidence confirms the narrative. The exploration of Albright and Glueck have brought to light evidence that a flourishing culture and many cities in Trasjordan were destroyed in 20th or 19th cent. BC, and that the country remained almost entirely uninhabited for several centuries afterwards. There is also some evidence that Sodom and Gomorrah, which presumably lay at the southern end of the Dead Sea, were destroyed ar that time.³²⁵

Enc. of Religion has explained the theme as follows:

³²³ Herman Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis* (Chicago: Open Court, 1901), p. 6.

³²⁴ Herman Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 1901, p. 9.

³²⁵ Siegfried H. Horn, *7th Day Adventist Bible Dic.* (Washington, DC: Review And Hrald, 1960), s.v. 'Abraham', p. 8.

The special effort to fit the war between Abraham and the kings of the east (Gn. 14) into the history of the second millennium by trying to identify the various kings and nations involved has failed to yield plausible proposals. The four eastern kingdoms, Elam, Babylonia, Assyria, and that of the Hittites, referred to cryptically in this text, never formed an alliance, nor did they ever control Palestine either collectively or individually during the second millennium BCE. *The whole account is historically impossible, and the story is very likely a late addition to Genesis* [stress added]. (...).

The common concern of a number of the stories is the quest for land and progeny, which reflects the urge of the land-hungry nomads to gain a foothold in the land where they had temporary pasturage. The stories thus portray a process of gradual peaceful settlement by separate groups³²⁶, each represented by a different patriarch.³²⁷

Hence, while analyzing the narrative of the incest, the prolonged animosity of the Israelites against the Moabites and the Ammonites must be kept in mind. The malicious slander against Lot (pbAh) and his daughters may, therefore, be the product of the protracted and interminable hostility of the Israelites against the descendants of Lot (pbAh) which found its reflection in a spurious addition to the primary writings pertaining to the destruction of the twin cities. Hence, modern scholars find no credibility in it. There are certain clear-cut indicators in the Bible which reveal that the story of the incest is a later insertion in the text. It cannot, therefore, be the word of God.

After the Exodus, we find first mention of Moab and the Ammonites in Deu. 2:9-19, where Moses (pbAh) tells the Israelites that:

And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither

³²⁶ The learned scholar has rightly disclosed the underlying intent and purpose of the Israelites in such stories.

³²⁷ *Enc. of Religion* 2nd Edn, ed. Lindsey Jones (Thomson Gale, 2005), s.v. 'Abraham', 1:13.

contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.³²⁸

Subsequently, the Lord also told Moses (pbAh) that:

And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession.³²⁹

These instructions from the Lord clearly indicate that both the Moabites and the Ammonites were the nations enjoying favor and blessings of the Lord in their own merit. Almighty God categorically asserts that He himself granted those lands to the Moabites and the Ammonites as being the descendants of Lot (pbAh).³³⁰ What is even more important, Lot (pbAh) was given those lands even before the Lord promised possession of Canaan to Abraham (pbAh) as is evident from the below excerpt:

And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.³³¹

Hence, the grudge of the Israelites against Lot (pbAh) and his descendants for choosing better lands is baseless. It was obviously due to the will of God that they were granted those lands and they did not obtain them due to any so-called 'choice' of their own. However, the Israelites always persisted to flout the verdict of the Lord. The story of the incest of Lot (pbAh) with his daughters reflects the same ugly and vicious manner of defiance of the Israelites

³²⁸ Deu. 2:9 KJV.

³²⁹ Deu 2:19 KJV.

³³⁰ Deu. 2:9, 19.

³³¹ Gen 13:14, 15 KJV.

against the commandment of the Lord regarding the bestowing of his favour on Lot (pbAh) and his descendants.

The Qur'ān also asserts that both Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) were delivered to the land blessed for the nations:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ³³²

And We delivered him, and Lot, unto the land that We had blessed for all beings.³³³

The verse clearly shows that the descendants of Lot (pbAh) enjoyed divine approval to possess the said land which has also been testified by the Bible.

d) Status and Mission of Lot (pbAh)

The Qur'ān tells that Abraham (pbAh) left Ur in search of some other land which might have better prospects for his mission. Lot (pbAh) was the only person at Ur who embraced the faith preached by Abraham (pbAh) and who opted to leave his home for the sake of the Lord:

فَأَمَّنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ³³⁴

But Lut had faith in Him: He said: I will leave home for the sake of my Lord: for He is Exalted in Might, and Wise.³³⁵

Abū-Shabānah explains the verse in the following words:

And it was only Lot who acknowledged him and accepted his message and said: My heart, my mind and my soul as of now do quit the world of disbelief and emigrate to the world of truth and belief and as of now do I dedicate my affectionate devotion to

³³² Al-Qur'ān: 21:71.

³³³ Arthur J. Arberry, *the Koran Interpreted*, p. 328.

³³⁴ Al-Qur'ān, 29:26.

³³⁵ Al-Qur'ān, 29:26 (tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

God, my creator, to Whom I betake my self, for He is the Almighty and the Source of wisdom and wise mysterious dispensations.³³⁶

Lot (pbAh), therefore, had the unique distinction to be the first Muslim in the faith of Abraham (pbAh). He sacrificed all the worldly interests in the way of Allah. Sheep, goats, animals or pasture land had never been the priority of Lot (pbAh). He was a devoted servant of the Lord and went to the Jordan valley only due to the call of the mission the Lord had assigned to him. It was, therefore, on special assignment from the Lord that Lot (pbAh) departed from Abraham (pbAh) and went to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah to preach faith and to guide the people to faith in God. Lot (pbAh), as such, was a foreigner among the people of Jordan valley whom the Lord assigned the hard task of warning the sinful transgressors of the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Qur'ān, therefore, records the uphill task of Lot (pbAh):

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَأَتَّاتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ- أَأَنتُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقَاطِعُونَ السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيَكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اتَّبِعْنَا بَعْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ.³³⁷

And (remember) Lut: behold, he said to his people: 'Ye do commit lewdness, such as no people in Creation (ever) committed before you. 'Do ye indeed approach men, and cut off the highway?- and practise wickedness (even) in your councils?' But his people gave no answer but this: they said: 'Bring us the Wrath of Allah if thou tellest the truth.'³³⁸

Another rendering of the same verses is as under:

And Lot [too was inspired by us] when he said unto his people 'verily, you commit abominations such as none in the world has

³³⁶ Al-Qur'ān, tr. Abū-Shabānah, Abdel Khālek Himmat (Cairo, 1993).

³³⁷ Al-Qur'ān 29:28-29.

³³⁸ Al-Qur'ān 29:28-29, tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

ever committed before you! Must you indeed approach men [with lust] and thus cut across the way [of nature]? – and must you commit these shameful deeds in your [open] assemblies?³³⁹

The story continues as follows:

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِينَ - وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ - قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطًا قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن فِيهَا لَنَنْجِيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ -³⁴⁰

He said: 'O my Lord! help Thou me against people who do mischief!' When Our Messengers came to Abraham with the good news, they said: 'We are indeed going to destroy the people of this township: for truly they are (addicted to) crime.' He said: 'But there is Lut there.' They said: 'Well do we know who is there: we will, certainly, save him and his following, - except his wife: she is of those who lag behind!'³⁴¹

Although the Jewish as well as the Christian scholars depict Lot (pbAh) as a discarded person prone to lust, yet the Qur'ān certifies him as an exalted messenger and prophet of the Lord just like Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), David (pbAh), Jesus (pbAh) and others. The Qur'ān while referring to Abraham (pbAh) reveals:

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ - وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ - وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ - وَمِن آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ - ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبَطَ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ - أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ فَإِن يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ - أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمُ افْتَدَتْهُ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِن هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرَى لِلْعَالَمِينَ -³⁴²

³³⁹ Al-Qur'ān 29:28-29, tr. Allama Muhammad Asad.

³⁴⁰ Al-Qur'ān 29:30-32.

³⁴¹ Al-Qur'ān 29:30-32, tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

³⁴² Al-Qur'ān, 6:84-90.

We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) We guided: and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good: And Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous: And Isma'il and Elisha, and Jonas, and Lot: and to all We gave favour above the nations: (To them) and to their fathers, and progeny and brethren: We chose them, and We guided them to a Straight Way. This is the Guidance of Allah: He giveth that guidance to whom He pleaseth, of His worshippers. If they were to join other gods with Him, all that they did, would be vain for them. These were the men to whom We gave the Book, and Authority, and Prophethood: if these (their descendants) reject them, Behold! We shall entrust their charge to a new people who reject them not. Those were the (prophets) who received Allah's guidance: Copy the guidance they received; Say: No reward for this do I ask of you: This is no less than a message for the nations.³⁴³

The Qur'ān, therefore, certifies Lot (pbAh) as an elevated envoy of the Lord and in the ranks of the great prophets enumerated above. He was one of those who were chosen and guided by the Lord. This certification of the Lord is, therefore, enough to wash off any blemish against Lot (pbAh). He has been confirmed repeatedly as a Messenger (Apostle) of the Lord (Al Qur'ān 26:160, 162³⁴⁴ and 37:133³⁴⁵). The verses quoted above testify to the fact that God exalted all the prophets mentioned therein and gave them his favors above nations besides guiding them to the straight path. They were given books, authority and Prophethood. As for Lot (pbAh), he was not only a Messenger (Apostle) and Prophet of the Lord but also a kinsman of Abraham (pbAh). He was the first person to profess faith in Abraham (pbAh). He also had the privilege to enjoy the company of Abraham

³⁴³ Tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

³⁴⁴ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ- (٢٠) إِلَيْنَا لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ-

³⁴⁵ وَإِنَّ لُوطًا لَيَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ-

(pbAh) for a long time. It was perhaps due to his grooming by Abraham (pbAh) that the Lord exalted Lot (pbAh) to the distinguished status of a Messenger (Apostle) and not merely a Prophet. Lot (pbAh) was a devout servant of the Lord, as he left his home and everything he owned only for the sake of the Lord (Al Qur'ān 29:26). His conduct is, therefore, above-board because God Almighty certified him in the ranks of the righteous ones as quoted above.

e) Guidance and Blessings through the Bible

Although the OT should have proliferated the guidance from the Lord to bless all the nations of the world yet the Israelites distorted the message of the Lord in such a manner that it became the book of national history and literature of Israel. Keeping in view its present form, therefore, it can more rightly be called the book of the Israelites rather than the book of God.

Except for worldly pursuits, the OT shows no preachings of faith or missionary involvements of great prophets like Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh) and Joseph (pbAh). Moses (pbAh) has been shown as the first prophet among the Israelites who made the covenant containing the strict monotheistic faith and the detailed law of the Lord. Both Moses (pbAh) and Aaron (pbAh) made hectic efforts during their life to groom the Israelites towards obedience to all the commandments of the Lord. Worship of one and the only God and submission to his will had been stressed as the first priority of the Israelites. As against this the acquisition of land, power and wealth has always been the first priority of the race. These objects had to be achieved even if it was at the cost of immoralities, injustice, falsehood, deception or atrocities against the people. For this, they treated God as their tribal god due to which they found it convenient to manage special commandments, miracles or some advice from prophets like

Moses (pbAh), specifically allowing them to do what the Lord had explicitly forbidden in His Law.

Special commandments, instructions and instances of immorality were introduced by Israel only to cover most of their transgressions of law, unethical acts and other atrocities against their enemies from the time of Exodus to the post exilic period. To achieve their purpose, they did not hesitate to attribute self-concocted accusations of falsehood, treachery, incest and other immoralities to prophets like Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Ishmael (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), David (pbAh), Solomon (pbAh) and others. To justify their vicious crimes the Israelites have painted their ancestors, the patriarchs, with shameful colours of cruelty, incest, deceit, and lies.

Since the denunciation of the prophets by the Israelites and the Christians is tantamount to rejecting them, therefore, the Lord fulfilled His promise of entrusting the final covenant to a new people (the Muslims) who reject them not (Al-Qur'ān 6:89)³⁴⁶. As such, the Muslims give full veneration to all the true prophets of the Lord who are exalted in their ranks as revealed by the Lord. Billions of blessings of Allah be on Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Ishmael (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), David (pbAh), Solomon (pbAh) Alijah (pbAh), and Jesus (pbAh) etc continuously for all times to come. We, as Muslims, stand as witness before the world for their piety, righteousness and exalted ranks before the Lord.

346 أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ فَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَيَسُوْا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ-

On those men We bestowed the Book, wisdom, and prophethood. If these deny them, We will entrust them to others who do not disbelieve in them (Tr. Beirut: Dar Al-Choura, 1980).

Ch-8. Fakery of the Allegation

Both Lot (pbAh) and his daughters were well aware of the cause of affliction. Keeping in view the severe punishment to the people of twin cities, we cannot think of Lot (pbAh) or his daughters to commit any flagrant violation of the Law of the Lord. We, therefore, find no credibility in the assertion that:

And the firstborn said unto the younger, our father is old, and there is not a man on the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth³⁴⁷.

The excuse that there was not a man to come unto the daughters of Lot (pbAh) was a misstatement of facts. It had already been recorded that *'the Canaanites and the Perizzites were still living in the land.'*³⁴⁸ The daughters of Lot (pbAh) had themselves been traveling along the family in the well populated regions like Egypt and Canaan. The plea to necessitate the incest alleged to the daughters of the prophet is, therefore, baseless. They had many options to marry and to procreate without recourse to incest. The apology that there was not a man to come in unto the daughters of Lot (Gen 19:31) is, therefore, an ill-conceived presumption or a blatant lie.

Lot (pbAh) and his daughters knew that the affliction was limited only to the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah and its surroundings. Before going to the hills, Lot (pbAh) and his daughters had sojourned at Zoar for some time. The angel of the Lord had

³⁴⁷ Gen 19:31 KJV.

³⁴⁸ Gen 13:7b, 16:6b GNB.

already promised Lot (pbAh) not to destroy Zoar,³⁴⁹ the small town with a King.³⁵⁰ We, therefore, find no reason for the fear of Lot (pbAh) as expressed below:

And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.³⁵¹

There was no genuine reason for the family to leave the small town so hurriedly for the mountains where no assurance of security had been given to them. We, therefore, find no plausibility in the story of incest which might be a pious forgery or a pernicious perversion of facts by some later redactors of the Genesis. It cannot, therefore, be taken as a faithfully related statement of facts. Besides this, certain other factors in the story suggest that it contains fiction than a truth.

a) Wine, the Only Sustenance for Life

Genesis describes the daughters of the prophet Lot (pbAh) as virgins in the marriageable age. They were fully aware of the abominable practices and sinfulness for which the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Eventually Lot (pbAh) and his daughters were led out of Sodom and Gomorrah by the angels quite in haste. Mother of these virgins had been turned into a pillar of salt just for her neglect of the warning. The family also feared imminent destruction of Zoar.³⁵² They, therefore, had to rush for their lives without taking any thing to sustain them except the wine. The composer of Gen 19:30-38 fails to explain the dire necessity of the wine except that the virgins had preplanned to dupe Lot (pbAh) into incest. The composure of the virgins in such

³⁴⁹ Gen 19:18-22.

³⁵⁰ Gen. 19:20-22.

³⁵¹ Gen 19:30 KJV.

³⁵² Gen 19:30.

horrible atmosphere and the audacity with which they carve out a perfect plan for preserving the seed of their father is wonderful.

Genesis has nothing to tell us about the reaction of Lot (pbAh) when he came to his senses in the morning. He has not been reported to express any sense of remorse. Instead of repenting himself or castigating his elder daughter, he again took vine willfully to repeat the pleasant experience of the yester-night for the benefit of his younger daughter. Thus both the daughters of Lot (pbAh) became pregnant with the first touch and each one gave birth to a son. The great prophet of the Lord neither repents afterwards nor does the Lord admonish him for the illicit deeds committed by him and his daughters. The Lord who took the most severe action against the sinful people of Sodom and Gomorrah connived at the heinous crime alleged against Lot (pbAh) and his daughters. This, therefore, shows double standards of justice which cannot be expected from the Almighty.

It was a miracle for Abraham (pbAh) to fertilize Sarah when he was 99 years of age, yet the Genesis narrates no such phenomenon for Lot (pbAh) who, too, might have been 94/95 years at that time. The main purpose being fulfilled, daughters of Lot (pbAh) gave no wine to him nor any incest took place thereafter. Should we believe all that rubbish as a revelation from the Lord?

The narrator of the story has nothing to tell us beyond the names of Moab and Ammon and the meanings of the said names to depict them as illegitimate sons of Lot (pbAh). There is no penitence on the part of Lot (pbAh) or his daughters. The Lord also connived at the crime which shows his tacit approval for incest. Even the modern Jewish as well as Christian apologists find nothing despicable in Lot's oblivion and sin. They show no disgust for such depravity. Hence after implicating Lot (pbAh) and his daughters they try to ameliorate the alleged misconduct of Lot (pbAh). Not only they exculpate his daughters but also appreciate their heroic deed

in a commendable manner. Lot (pbAh) too was condemned only for the negligence which caused him to sleep with his two daughters (Gen. 19:30-38). Here is an example of their treatment of the situation:

Although he was not aware of what he was doing he allowed himself to become intoxicated again after he had found out what had happened to him with his elder daughter. However, his daughters' intention was honourable (Hor 10b)³⁵³ [what a wonderful tribute is being paid to the virgin daughters for their heroic deed so promptly and generously!!].

This is how the Jewish scholars have been appreciating the shameful deeds violating the Law of the Lord.

b) Favourable Interpretation of Incest

There is no doubt that the almighty had provided the Israelites with guidance and the light to live by. Almighty Allah also strengthened them by raising among them hundreds of prophets; but the Israelites mostly ignored or opposed the teachings of the prophets. In spite of all this the Israelites always took pride in proclaiming themselves 'Holy Seed' or a 'Holy Race' being descendants of Abraham (pbAh). They continue to claim all privileges as chosen people of God refusing always to accept any liabilities or responsibilities ensuing from their covenant with Yahweh. They changed the law and also the life history of the patriarchs or the prophets to conform to the shameful conduct of the Israelites in the post-exilic period. They have consciously spoiled the image of the patriarchs like Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Ishmael (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh) and Esau only to humiliate their descendants such as the Canaanites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Ishmaelites, the Midianites and the Edomites and even perhaps the Samaritans who as retaliation to the same

³⁵³ *Enc. Judaica*, 2:216, s.v. 'Lot'.

spoiled the image of Judah, Boaz, David (pbAh), Absalom, Tamar, Solomon (pbAh) to humiliate their descendants i.e. the rulers of Judea.

The coverage for Lot (pbAh) and the appreciation of the conduct of Lot's daughters by *Enc. Judaica* as noted above, therefore reflects the same trend of thought inherited from the ancient ancestors of the Israelites. No wonder there are expositors who willingly admire a similar incestuous act between Judah and Tamar³⁵⁴. They not only approve it but even idolize the heroic act of Tamar due to the end result, i.e. the birth of two illegitimate sons of Judah: Pharez (Perez) and Zera³⁵⁵. According to the Bible, Pharez had the unique honor of being the great-great grandfather of King David (pbAh) whose' descendants continued to rule over the kingdom of Judea till 586 B.C. Even the Christian scholars applaud the audacious act of Tamar because without her venture with Judah it was impossible to have King David (pbAh) or Jesus Christ (pbAh), the promised messiah as the ultimate saviour of the Christians.

Instead of showing any indignation for incest the expositors of the Bible feel themselves under some compulsion to venerate or to apologize for the incestuous coupling in such favorable words that one is inclined to rate highly the intention and gallantry of Tamar and the devotion of the daughters of Lot (pbAh). Had Tamar the dauntless heroine not taken the destiny of man in her own hands, the Israelites would neither get David (pbAh), the greatest King of Israel, nor the Christians would get their Messiah as the ultimate saviour of humankind. Perhaps the Christians feel deeply indebted to Tamar's splendid and venturesome step which forced the hand of God for the birth of the greatest king of the Israelites, i.e. David (pbAh), Solomon and also Jesus Christ (pbAh) without whom human beings might have been doomed to

³⁵⁴ Daughter-in-law of Judah.

³⁵⁵ Gen. 38:1-30.

damnation forever. Jonathan Kirsch has commented on the episode in the following words:

The narrator of Genesis 38-or, more likely, some pious editor who came along later and tried to cool down and clean up the story-hastens to reassure us that Judah did not sleep with his daughter-in-law a second time: 'And he knew her again no more' (Gen. 38:26). But Tamar does not disappear from the biblical narrative. Rather, she gives birth to twin boys, Perez and Zerah, and the Bible carefully notes that Perez is the progenitor of a long line of celebrated figures, including David, Solomon, and according to the NT, Jesus of Nazareth. So, Tamar, the wilful young woman who plays the harlot in order to seduce her own father-in-law, is the great-great-grandmother of kings, Prophets, and the Christian Messiah.

Still, the figure of Tamar – a Canaanitess, a seducer and sexual trickster, a young woman who refuses to submit to the authority of the stern patriarchy under which she lives- has been nearly written out of the biblical tradition over the centuries precisely because her sexual adventure on the road to Enaim is so audacious, provocative, and titillating.

In the third passage after the above the author continues:

(...), the coupling of the virile Judah and the fecund Tamar will bring forth the greatest kings of ancient Israel and ultimately the Messiah. (...), above all, Tamar is a woman whose will is so strong, whose passion burns so bright, that she writes herself into history through an act of illicit physical love.³⁵⁶

Many stories of incest, fornication and rape are the parts of the Bible yet the rabbis of the Jews and the priests of the Christians insist that the Bible is the infallible word of God. They feel proud of the genealogies of the royal house of David which ultimately imparts immaculate birth to the child in whom the deity became flesh and dwelt with men to be demonstrated as 'God on Cross' yet the ultimate saviour of humankind.

³⁵⁶ Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, 1997, p. 124f.

c) Improbability of Incest between Judah and Tamar

The OT was a book of theology. Its main purpose should have been to acquaint the humankind with the Lord and His attributes. It was, therefore, supposed to guide humankind about their obligations towards the Almighty and His commandments to live by. Promises of good rewards to the righteous and severe punishment to the transgressors should have, therefore, been the main theme of the revelation. Prophets and patriarchs were messengers of the Lord sent to humankind to guide them towards righteousness and to provide them with instances of perfect submission to the will of God. Other people had to take inspiration from their good conduct to receive rewards as the Lord had bestowed on His elects. As against them, the instances of severe punishment to the transgressors were meant to create deterrent effect on humankind so that they may not indulge in evil.

Keeping in view the overall purpose of the book of revelation, an ordinary reader stands wonder-struck to find filthy stories of incest, fornication, treachery, wickedness, falsehood and immoral acts attributed to the prophets and the patriarchs. One, therefore, fails to appreciate the purpose of God to narrate stories of incest, rape and cruelty committed by the chosen dignitaries of the Lord along with connivance of the Lord on the same. Among such stories is the incest between Judah and Tamar. Besides being unnatural part of the history of Israel, the uncouth nature and strange placement of the narrative highlights oddity of the story in the holy writ. Even the most credulous reader will be confronted with the questions as under:

- 1) Why God has depicted the prophets and the patriarchs as liars, cheaters, greedy fornicators and lascivious transgressors of the law of the Lord? If they were really so wicked, why didn't the Lord punish them?
- 2) Was Judah so lax in morals that he used to hunt for the harlots? Was harlotry so common in that society that even Tamar,

the daughter-in-law of Judah, had enough knowledge to play the same? Her adeptness to choose the right place and time was wonderful. Similarly, her foreknowledge about the activities of Judah and the planning to entice him without any shame on her part was remarkable.

3) Is it conceivable that Judah did not recognize Tamar during the intercourse? Alternately, if he recognized her then and there, where was the need for the suspense described in Gen 38:20-25? Instead of any remorse or repentance on the part of Judah or Tamar, the narrator brings the suspense to an end with approbation. He also takes care to assure the readers that Judah and Tamar lived ever after righteously.

And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her no more.

Such narratives definitely leave a moral impact on the reader. If it has been a norm for the elects of God to commit grievous sins without any accountability or retribution then why not to indulge into everything you desire. Why to strive for righteousness or to refrain from all that had been prohibited by law?

In addition to the above, it is also necessary to point out that the story of incest between Judah and Tamar is chronologically an impossible event in the text. Obviously, it is an awkward interlude between the story of Joseph and his brothers and Joseph and Potiphar's wife. A distinguished commentator on the Genesis also alludes to the same;

There is not room for the events either before or after the events of 37, nor does the Joseph narrative suggest that Judah left his brothers and lived the independent life here described. The chronology is quite inconsistent with the view that Genesis is a unity, *Judah was roughly about twenty* [stress added] when Joseph, at the age of, at least, seventeen (37₂), went into Egypt.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷ *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, 1920, p. 162.

According to the Genesis, Judah parted from his brothers and pitched his tent near an Adullamite named Hira³⁵⁸. There he married a Canaanite named Shua and in due course of time he had from her, his sons Er, Onan and Shelah. Subsequently, when his two elder sons had attained maturity Judah got a wife named Tamar for his first born Er, but Er greatly offended the Lord, so, the Lord killed him³⁵⁹ (note that the Genesis has nothing to describe about the nature of Er's offence).

We do not know how long Tamar lived with Er. Anyhow, the second son of Judah might have gone into union with Tamar only after the end of her mourning period. God, however, was extremely sensitive regarding the matters concerning Tamar. He, therefore, also punished Onan with death which was not a sentence prescribed by Him for the said offence. It seems that the third son of Judah named Shelah was much younger than his deceased brothers as can be appreciated from the following verse:

Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.³⁶⁰

Meanwhile the youngest son of Judah had perhaps grown up and Judah hesitated to fulfill his promise with Tamar. It has been reported:

Years passed and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua died. After Judah completed the period of mourning, he went up to Timnah for the shearing of his sheep...³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Gen. 38:1.

³⁵⁹ Gen 38:7.

³⁶⁰ Gen 38:11 KJV.

³⁶¹ Gen. 38:12, *New American Bible*, 1971-72 edn.

On way to Timnah, Tamar seduced Judah under the guise of a sacred harlot. As a pledge to pay a yearling kid Tamar obtained the seal, cord, and staff of Judah and left the place without waiting for the kid.

Three months later, Judah heard that Tamar had plainly broken her marriage contract being with child with some man other than Shelah. Obeying the custom of those days, he sentenced her to the stake. But as they led Tamar away, she sent Judah his seal, cords, and staff, saying: 'If I must die, let the Israelite with whom I sinned also die; he will be known by these tokens.'

Judah, recognizing his own pledges, reversed the judgement. 'She shall live', he pronounced, 'For I myself am at fault: not having honoured the marriage contract made with this woman on my son Shelah's behalf.' So Tamar went free; yet Judah could not touch her again, nor could she marry Shelah.³⁶²

As a result of incestuous mating among them Tamar gave birth to twins named Pharez (Perez) and Zerah. This Pharez had the unique distinction of being the great great grandfather of King David as well as Jesus Christ. No wonder the authors of *Heb. Myths* seem to justify the act of Tamar as follows:

Like all noble mothers of Israel, Tamar possessed the gift of prophecy. She foresaw that the Messiah would descend from her; and it was this prescience that prompted her to obey the ancient Ammorite law by which every girl, before marriage, must spend seven days outside the city gate selling herself to strangers.³⁶³

They also add:

As a woman betrothed to an Israelite, Tamar took grave risks in playing the harlot, but since she handled the matter discreetly and got children from the man who had denied them to her, she became exalted in popular tradition and listed with Rachel and

³⁶² *Hebrew Myth*, p. 245.

³⁶³ *Hebrew Myths*, p.245.

Leah as a 'heroic mother of Israel' (Ruth 4:12). Like Ruth the Moabitess and Rahab the sacred harlot of Jericho (Josh 2), this Canaanite woman became (through Perez) an ancestress of David, and thus of the promised Messiah (see Matthew 1:3-6).³⁶⁴

In all normal circumstances the events such as Judah's, parting from his brothers, his marriage and getting two sons in due course, while the third one was born much later than they might have taken 10 to 15 years. Other events up to the marriage of his two elder sons on their maturity might have taken another 30 to 35 years. The intervening period between the marriage of the two sons, Tamar's going to her father's house after which 'years passed' and Judah's wife died, Judah's going to Timnah after completing the period of mourning, and the time lag between the incestuous intercourse leading to birth of Pharez and Zerah must have taken at least another 10 to 15 years. We therefore require at least 45 to 50 years for natural completion of the events.

A Chronology of Biblical Christianity, on the other hand, tells us that Judah was about twenty years when Joseph was sold into Egypt in 1699 B.C. It also tells that Pharez and Zerah were born to Tamar in 1696 B.C.³⁶⁵, i.e. about three to four years after Judah's parting from his brothers. We, therefore, do not find any chronological possibility of Judah's getting married, having three sons, marrying them on their maturity just within three or four years. The impossibility further increases when we account for a few years after the death of two eldest sons of Judah and 'years passed' when after mourning the death of his wife, Judah went to Timnah. A year or so might have further elapsed to account for the incestuous relation and the birth of Pharez and Zerah. These

³⁶⁴ *Hebrew Myths*, p.247.

³⁶⁵ Dr. R.C. Wetzell, *A Chronology of Biblical Christianity* (Books For The Ages, Ages Software. Albany, OR USA, Version 1.0 © 1997).

events require at least 45 to 50 years to be completed. As such, by no means can we compress within 3 to 4 years the events requiring a natural time lag of 50 years. It can thus be appreciated that the story of incest between Judah and Tamar has no truth in it. It seems to be a product of the post-exilic period because it reflects the reaction and hatred leading to separatist policy of Nehemiah and Ezra against the Samaritans, Canaanites, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites and many other nations including the gentiles. It also seems that the rape of Dinah has been historicized merely to express similar sentiments of hatred to prevent intermarriage between the Jews and the Canaanites during the post-exilic period.

Although the juicy interpolation of the incestuous tales in Genesis merits outright rejection on the basis of circumstantial and chronological impossibilities, yet our Jewish as well as Christian brothers continue to insist that Genesis is inspired word of God and must therefore be taken as correct. Hence, instead of rejecting the filthy story, the Christian apologists try to establish its credibility by hallowing the odious crime of incest in such a manner that it becomes a heroic and sacred deed of benevolence. It is not therefore the nature of the sin or a crime but its interpretation that matters. Interpretation can convert a heinous crime into a graceful performance. It can turn the barbarous act of the Romans, i.e. crucifixion of Jesus (pbAh) for alleged insurrection against the Romans into the sanctification of a saving sacrifice for salvation of humankind. It is, therefore, to be observed that the unlawful though bold act of Tamar becomes commendable merely because the expositors try to make us believe that Tamar was prompted to do so with the good intention to make her the distinguished great-great-grandmother of King David (pbAh) and the Messiah of the Christians. It was, therefore, only due to the incestuous venture of the daring '*Prima Donna*' that the Israelites

got their greatest king while the Christians their Lord and the Saviour.

It appears that the Israelites in the ancient times did not have abundance of story lines or numerous themes as well as plots which could be utilized to construct the ancient history of the Israelites. They therefore had no choice except to repeat or apply certain popular themes on different occasions for various persons in new situations at many places in the OT. Such was the example of Sarah's incident with the king of Egypt³⁶⁶ which had to be repeated as the incident with King Abimelech.³⁶⁷ Again there was another famine when we find the theme repeated in case of Isaac (pbAh) and Rebecca with the same or a different king Abimelech.³⁶⁸ Similarly Tamar is a favorite name for incest. Aside from Judah and Tamar it finds its repetition in a new coupling in entirely different environments and scheme. This time it was Amnon son of King David (pbAh) with Tamar daughter of David (pbAh). The readers can find the story with elaborate details recorded in 2-Sam 13:1-21.

According to the Qur'ān Both King David (pbAh) and Solomon (pbAh) were exalted prophets of the Lord. Islam therefore stresses primarily on their righteousness as prophets and attaches secondary importance to their Kingship. As against this both the Jews and the Christians depict King David (pbAh) as an ideal King and a prototype of the Messiah. In spite of all this they blemished King David (pbAh) with various vices including the story of Bathsheba and elimination of Uriah the Hittite, i.e. the husband of Bathsheba. Aside from this the authors of the OT accuse both King Solomon (pbAh) and Absalom son of King David (pbAh) with fatal sins. Absalom son of David (pbAh) and brother of

³⁶⁶ Gen 12:10-20.

³⁶⁷ Gen 20:1-18.

³⁶⁸ Gen 26:1-11.

Tamar (the victim of incest) rebelled against his father and forced him to fly. It is said that Absalom reached Jerusalem where:

Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong. 22. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.³⁶⁹

Stories black painting the great and holy persons cannot be true part of the Holy Book which is proclaimed to be the inspired word of God. Such stories, if necessary, should have been compiled separately as works of history and literature of the Israelites.

The Muslims, however, take a strong exception to such unfounded allegations levelled by the Israelites against their own ancestors as well as others. The Biblical scholars should abstain from ascribing such abominable and nefarious deeds to the great prophets. Such filthy stories encourage the youth to adopt the same line of conduct without any sense of guilt or fear of punishment from the Lord. It is inconceivable that such stories of incest, sex perversion, cheating or various other immoral practices could have been revealed by the Lord to spoil and corrupt their unpolluted future generations.

Lot (pbAh) and his daughters show no remorse for their incest as if they found nothing sinister in it. Even the authors of the Genesis and the expositors of the OT expressed no disapproval for them. It is a matter of concern that incest has been a popular theme of the OT to entertain its readers. The Hellenized Christians, too, did not despise such accounts due to their similarities with the myths of the Greeks as well as the

³⁶⁹ 2Sa 16:21-22.

Romans. However, after debasing their rivals, i.e. the Moabites and the Ammonites, the pious scribes of the Israelites had no further interest in Lot (pbAh) and his daughters or their sons, i.e. Moab and Ben'ammi (the progenitors of the Moabites and the Ammonites).

Obviously the first-born of Lot (pbAh) committed a gross error in presuming that *'there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us'*³⁷⁰. Aside from some hundred thousand men living around them, the pious reporter must have been there to witness the whole affair closely and to record the conversation between the daughters of Lot (pbAh) accurately. There are, however, some critics who, instead of giving any credit to the narrator, try to find fault in his reporting. It has been pointed out that:

Lot's daughters like his wife are unnamed in the Bible ... a considerable slight in a book whose authors are fairly obsessed with genealogies and the giving and meaning of names---but they show themselves willing to be bold, intrepid, and resourceful young women who are willing to defy the taboo against incest and the apparent will of God in order to restore life to the blasted and empty place that they beheld from their mountain refuge.³⁷¹

d) Plea of Nobel Motive Obliterates the Crime

Let us excuse the reporter for his lapse because being exhilarated with the excitement of achieving his target to malign Lot (pbAh) and his daughters, he did not need to report anything else. After his success in condemning the ancestors of the Moabites and the Ammonites, it would have been a futile effort on his part to go into minor details. The reporter, therefore, had no interest in knowing or recording the names of Lot's wife or of his daughters. Anyhow he did not fail to record

³⁷⁰ Gen 19:31.

³⁷¹ J. Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, 1997, p. 58.

the names of the sons of Lot (pbAh) with their meanings to prove them as the ancestors of their enemies, i.e. the Moabites and the Ammonites. Having done his job, the narrator was fully justified and satisfied to abandon Lot (pbAh) and his daughters to their fate, i.e. death in obscurity at the hill. The author of *The Harlot by the Side of the Road* invites our attention to another aspect of the story of incest in the following:

Significantly, the elaborate seduction of their father is described without a single disproving word from the biblical author. Lot's daughters are spared the harsh judgment that is visited upon so many other women in the Bible. Starting with Eve and that damned apple, women have been depicted (and mostly condemned) as the wilful and wily seducers of men: Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:7), Delilah (Judges 16:5), and Salome (Matt. 14:6-8) are only some of the most famous examples. Even the daughter of the patriarch Jacob, a woman who is the apparent victim of rape, is blamed by some of the more misogynistic rabbinical sages for provoking her rapist. (...), but the vast weight of rabbinical commentary overlooks the manner in which Lot's daughters impregnate themselves and focuses instead on their noble motive.³⁷²

In spite of all this justification and approval of incest by the authors of the Bible as well as the expositors, it is difficult for us to ignore the background and actual circumstances of Lot (pbAh) and his daughters in the cave. Lot (pbAh) was a great prophet who enjoyed protection of the Lord from spiteful vicissitudes of Satan. The Lord saved him and his family only due to their righteousness. His daughters were not unaware of the cause of affliction of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They themselves witnessed the towns blasting into ruins. The girls knew that their mother was changed into a pillar of salt only due to her violation of the prohibition to look back. The danger of destruction was not yet over and the daughters of Lot (pbAh) might be trembling due to

³⁷² J. Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, 1997, p. 58.

horror of death till then. Moreover, their being rescued by the Lord from the disastrous destiny of the Sodomites etc. is a clear proof of their righteousness. How can it be conceived that they might have committed such a detestable offence of incest against the law of the Lord. Their being spared from the punishment is a vital proof of their righteousness, piety, and innocence. In view of all this, we cannot agree with the narrator that the daughters of Lot (pbAh) could have even thought of such a fatal sin while they still had smoldering ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah in their sight! We, therefore, find no plausibility in Lot's daughters' defying the taboo against incest, which could be punished with death there and then aside from the perdition in the hereafter.

Chapter-9

Ch-9. Inadequacy of the Revelations about Lot (pbAh)

a) God Unaware of the Matter?

The Bible is claimed to be the revealed word of God. It, must therefore, serve as the standard bearer of justice, morality and guidance for the humankind but in the case of the abominable story of incest among Lot (pbAh) and his daughters one is at a loss to discover any sublime purpose behind the revelation without showing any disapproval or punishment for the heinous sin. It seems nothing more than an instigation and suggestion towards immorality. It is obviously against the design and teachings of God. Fabrication and insertion of such base stories in the Holy Book is shameful and detestable and ought to be rejected outright. Even the authors of such stories have gained nothing enviable or commendable. The sole purpose it serves is only to testify their self-designed and fabricated word of God. It is unfortunate to see that the Christians as well as the Jewish scholars endorse such libellous imputations to one of the greatest prophets of the Lord without any sense of guilt or fear of severe punishment in the hereafter.

According to the Bible Lot (pbAh) was either a nephew or a cousin of Abraham (pbAh). In all probability he also was brother of Sarah and Milcah who both were the great-great-grandmothers of the Israelites. Similarly, Ruth, the wife of Boaz, was a Moabitess, i.e.

descendant of Lot (pbAh) and his daughters. She happened to be the great grandmother of King David (pbAh), and according to the belief of the Jews and the Christians, she was to be the great-great-grand-mother of Messiah who was to be descended from Lot (pbAh) through Naamah, the Ammonitess.³⁷³ This Naamah was the wife of King Solomon (pbAh). She happens to be the grandmother of all the kings of Judea after him. In their eagerness to prove their ascendancy over the Moabites and the Ammonites, the Israelites did not mind spoiling their own ancestry.

From paternal side, both King David (pbAh) and the promised Messiah of Israel descend from Pharez, borne out of the alleged incestuous union between Judah and Tamar.³⁷⁴ The expositors of the Bible, instead of discarding the said concoction as baseless, have tried to interpret it in favorable terms. The apologists appreciate the heroic role of Tamar and the seductive role of Ruth by presenting them as prime builders of the destiny of the Israelites. It was the daring as well as majestic role of Tamar and Ruth that led to the birth of King David (pbAh), the father of Solomon (pbAh) and the great kings of Judea and ultimately the Messiah awaited by the Israelites. Similarly the story of incest between Lot (pbAh) and his daughters becomes sacred only because it deprecates the Moabites and the Ammonites by alleging illegitimacy to their pro-genitors. Since the libel³⁷⁵ suggested illegitimacy of the Moabites and Ammonites, therefore, it had to be upheld as true to debar the said nations from claiming any parity of rights on the lands desired by the Israelites. Instead of recanting from the slander, they appreciate the sagaciousness of Lot's

³⁷³ *Enc. Judaica*, vol. 13, p. 216.

³⁷⁴ Gen chapter 38.

³⁷⁵ 'Libel' means: 'False and defamatory written statement'.

daughters, the heroic role of Tamar and also the seductive role of Ruth because it led to the birth of King David (pbAh), the great grand-father of the Messiah awaited by the Israelites. The Christians, however, identified him in Jesus (pbAh) whom they confessed not only as a messiah but God of the Christians.

The story of David's sexual assault on Bathsheba³⁷⁶ and King Solomon's and Absalom's sex with their father's concubines has however escaped the attention of the exegetes for better interpretation of the same. Perhaps such assaults stand compensated by tracing down the bloodline to Mary and Jesus Christ (pbAh), her son. Even Mary has not been spared from the blemish by the Israelites. In spite of all this, the Christians continue to reiterate that both Mary and Jesus Christ (pbAh) had been borne through immaculate conceptions inheriting no defilement from the sin of Adam (pbAh), Eve or other ancestors of Mary and Jesus (pbAh). We also have to believe that while eating from the forbidden fruit caused degeneration of the entire descendants of Adam (pbAh), the births from successive incestuous unions or bastards had no impact on immaculate births of Mary or Jesus Christ (pbAh). We, however, find no rationality in making all human beings inheritors of sin and degeneration from Adam (pbAh) and Eve while proclaiming at the same time immunity for Mary and Jesus (pbAh). Even today the expositors of the Bible continue to uphold all the stories of incest, fornication and sexual assaults in the Bible as correct but they deny that such defilement might have infected the blood line leading to King David (pbAh) and subsequently to Jesus Christ (pbAh). Mr. Jonathan Kirsch while commenting on the incestuous story of Lot (pbAh) refers to the same paradox as under:

³⁷⁶ 2-Sam, chap. 11.

But the fact is that the Bible reserves a crucial role for these cave-born bastards in spite of their incestuous origins and the future clashes between their descendants and the Israelites. A Moabite woman named Ruth is destined to marry an Israelite man, and their bloodline will lead directly to the birth of David, the greatest of the kings of Israel³⁷⁷. An Ammonite woman named Naamah will be counted among King Solomon's one thousand wives and concubines – and, fatefully, it is Naamah who will give birth to Solomon's successor to the throne of Israel (1 Kings 14:21). And it is from the House of David and Solomon that the Messiah will come, in both the Jewish and Christian traditions.

So the mountain cave in which Lot and his daughters seek refuge turns out to be the womb of history, and their drunken couplings amount to a sanctified union that will bestow upon the world what the Bible regards as its ultimate saviour. Neither the taboo against incest nor the fear of divine retribution are sufficient to discourage these two audacious young women from doing what needs to be done to preserve their father's seed. What appears at first to be merely black comedy or black propaganda is suddenly elevated into a sublime morality tale, a saga of the struggle of life against death, in which Lot's unnamed daughters are the unlikely heroes.³⁷⁸

Besides alleging incest to Lot (pbAh) and illegitimacy to Moabites and the Ammonites, the authors of the Genesis did not spare even Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah. They attribute timidity, greed, deception, falsehood and shamelessness to Abraham (pbAh) leading to defiling the figure of Sarah, the great grand mother of the believers.³⁷⁹ Perez a descendant of Abraham (pbAh), was born out of incestuous union between Judah and Tamar³⁸⁰. Among the descendants of Perez was Salmon³⁸¹ who, through

³⁷⁷ Ruth 4:18-22.

³⁷⁸ Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, 1997, p 60f.

³⁷⁹ Gen: 12:10-20; 20:1-17.

³⁸⁰ Gen: 38.

³⁸¹ Salma or Salmon was the father of Boaz, the husband of Ruth.

the union with Rahab the prostitute,³⁸² gave birth to Boaz, the great grand father of King David (pbAh). This Boaz was seduced by Ruth the Moabitess to marry her³⁸³.

According to modern scholarship the story referred to above conceals much more than it tries to reveal. Both Boaz and Ruth have the honour to be the great-great grand father and grand mother of the greatest celebrity of the Israelites, i.e. King David (pbAh), the proto-type of the legendary Messiah of Israel being awaited by them till today. Even King David (pbAh) has been alleged to have indulged in sexual assault on Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite. It is said that Bath-sheba became pregnant and King David (pbAh) got Uriah killed in the battlefield.³⁸⁴ We learn that King Solomon (pbAh) was the child of this Bathsheba. King Solomon (pbAh) had 700 wives and 300 concubines. One of his wives was Naamah, the Moabitess. She happened to be the grand mother of all the kings descending from Solomon (pbAh) who continued to rule over Judea till 587 B.C. The tragedy is that the Israelites themselves have black painted their ancestors as noted above. Being once inserted into the OT, the tales stand sanctified as an infallible word of God. As such fornication, fraud, falsehood, treachery and incest can neither be denied nor expunged from the scripture.

b) Ignorance or Concealment of the Status and Mission of Lot (pbAh)

The Israelites have repeatedly asserted to be the only legitimate descendants of Abraham (pbAh). To prove their

³⁸² Josh: 2:1-21, 6:22-25; Matt 1:2-6a GNB.

³⁸³ Ruth: chapters: 2-4.

³⁸⁴ 2-Sam, 11:2-17.

superiority over other genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh), they denied the legitimacy of other genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh) on the basis of self-fabricated allegations against them. This was done to make the Israelites the only inheritors of the land, blessings, faith as well as traditions of the Patriarch excluding all other genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh). In spite of all their boastful claims, the Israelites factually know nothing either about the faith, or the mission of Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh). Genesis perhaps took its present shape around 400 BC, (c. 15 centuries after Abraham (pbAh)), when in the absence of any reliable source of history or revelation certain scribes of Israel reconstructed the history, life, work and conduct of Abraham (pbAh) and other patriarchs. Not to say of faith and the traditions, the Israelites did not know even the name of the God of Abraham (pbAh) and the patriarchs.³⁸⁵ This shows that they inherited no teachings or preachings of Abraham (pbAh) simply because they had no interest in the inheritance of faith or spiritual guidance from Abraham (pbAh). Hence, instead of spiritual inheritance, they proclaimed primarily the inheritance of material or temporal possessions such as land, wealth and power. That is why they reiterate inheritance of the entire land of Canaan from Abraham (pbAh) which he himself did not possess.

Factually, the Israelites did neither attach any spiritual importance to Abraham (pbAh) nor they acknowledge him as primary father in faith. They, therefore, had no interest to inherit teachings of faith from Abraham (pbAh) because they did not acknowledge him as a paragon of virtue or even a prophet. Similarly, they do not know that Lot (pbAh) was an exalted messenger of the Lord like Abraham (pbAh), Moses, (pbAh) and

³⁸⁵ Exo 3:12-18, 6:4.

Jesus (pbAh).³⁸⁶ It is shocking to observe that even regarding the prophet-hood of Abraham (pbAh) there is only a casual reference in the Genesis³⁸⁷, and that too, brazenly mixed with the filth thrown on him and also on Sarah his wife. Perhaps the authors of Genesis were not fully satisfied by attributing greed, deception, shamelessness and timidity to Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah in the first instance of her abduction by the king of Egypt.³⁸⁸ For further and fuller display of the same, they had to record a repeat performance of Sarah with king Abimelech and Rebecca with the same Abimelech or his successor with that name. The redactors had touched the abyss to defile Sarah when God intervened to tell Abimelech that:

Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.³⁸⁹

It is to be appreciated that there is only a passing reference about the Prophethood of Abraham (pbAh), and that too, in the protestant version of the Bible. The Catholic version, however, does not designate him as a prophet even at this point. It indifferently records:

Therefore return the man's wife – **as a spokesman** he will intercede for you- that your life may be saved. If you do not

³⁸⁶ It is significant to note that the people of Lot (pbAh) were afflicted with the worst punishment of all the transgressors. The punishments which had been afflicted on other nations singly, all of them were afflicted upon the people of Sodom and Gomorrah collectively. It, on the one hand, shows what great status had Lot (pbAh) got before the Lord; and, on the other hand, it also shows what great transgression had the people of Lot (pbAh) committed against the Lord collectively.

³⁸⁷ Gen 20:7.

³⁸⁸ Gen 12:10-20.

³⁸⁹ Gen 20:7 KJV.

return her, you can be sure that you and all who are yours will certainly die.³⁹⁰

It clearly signifies that the Catholics acknowledge Abraham (pbAh) only as a spokesman: neither as a great Prophet of God nor the founder of true faith. It is certain therefore that the authors of the Genesis had neither a well preserved revelation nor a reliable information about the faith and the early life of Abraham (pbAh) at Ur. Hence they know nothing about the encounter of Abraham (pbAh) with the king and the idolatrous community there. We, however, feel that in the absence of any historical records or revelation the Israelites had no recourse except to fill the gap with imaginative reconstruction of events with material interpretation of the events. The Israelites, therefore, have no concept of higher errands for which the Lord sent Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) to various places in the Middle East. It is only the Qur'ān that has revealed correctly the actual background with crucial events and facts pertaining to the mission, the life and the end result of the efforts of all prominent prophets of the Lord before and after Abraham (pbAh). Hence only Islamic tradition provides details about the prophetic mission of Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) at Ur along with the genuine reasons to leave their native place for various other lands in the Middle East.

According to Islamic history and traditions it was neither for the acquisition of land nor for any other material benefits that Lot (pbAh) and Abraham (pbAh) went to Haran or Canaan. Abraham's father at Ur was high priest of the king. In those days the high-priest was second only to the king in status, power and wealth. Abraham (pbAh) being the eldest son of his father had bright chances to succeed him. Had Abraham (pbAh) any longing only for power, wealth or the descendants, there could be no paucity of the same at Ur because he already enjoyed distinguished

³⁹⁰ Gen 20:7 NAB.

background in the commercial and cultural hub of the world. Haran or Canaan was no match with flourishing town of Ur. No other king could have given him the wealth and the status equal to that he was likely to inherit from his father. As such, Abraham (pbAh) had no need to travel to Egypt or to go to Abimelech to exchange his wife for wealth. Abraham (pbAh) had already relinquished much more at Ur than could ever be replenished from some other source in the world. In view of this, no credibility can be attached to the alleged allurements of land or descendants in Canaan.

Land or property had never been the ideal of Abraham (pbAh). He had to leave Ur only due to ever-increasing hostility between him and the idolatrous and polytheistic people as well as the king of Ur which made it impossible for him to continue his mission there. Abraham's mission was nothing except preaching true faith in Almighty Allah. The Qur'ān explicitly asserts that Abraham (pbAh) called his people to desist from idol-worship and to submit themselves before the will of the Lord. Similarly, Lot (pbAh) too was leaving home and forsaking Ur only for the sake of his faith in only one God without having any materialistic considerations. He was the first one to believe in Abraham's faith due to which he left his home town saying:

إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي.³⁹¹

Verily, I [too] shall forsake the domain of evil (and turn) to my Sustainer!³⁹²

I will flee to my Lord;³⁹³

According to the Qur'ān, Lot (pbAh) was an Apostle and Prophet of Almighty Allah. He was given the special assignment to warn the people of Sodom and Gomorrah so that they might believe

³⁹¹ Al Qur'ān 29:26.

³⁹² Tr. Allamah Asad.

³⁹³ Tr. A. J. Arberry.

in the Lord and desist from their sinful deeds. He, therefore, did not go to Sodom as a herd-man to graze his animals as presumed by the authors of the Genesis. Lot (pbAh) was an Apostle (رسول) of Almighty Allah like Abraham (pbAh) and was sent to Sodom as a preacher and dispenser of law, justice, and righteousness and worship of only one God discarding the worship of all gods except Almighty Allah. He had no liking for the company of the sinful people, as some expositors of the Bible malign him.

Lot's mission was much higher than grazing sheep and goats. Though Lot (pbAh) was a foreigner in the land, yet he tried his utmost to eradicate the evil by preaching there. Ultimately, on rejection of the Prophet and refusal to stop sinning against the Lord, the incorrigible were obliterated³⁹⁴ from the face of earth as recorded in the Bible as well as in the Qur'ān.

c) Lot (pbAh), a Warner from the Lord

It is a constant and unchanging tradition of God that He does not punish any community unless He sends a Warner to them. Even after sending the Warner, no punishment was awarded to the people unless and until they rejected the Messenger scornfully and openly rebelled against the Prophet and the Lord. In many cases, even when a small number of people repented and started following the prophet, God was kind enough to give respite to others. Lot (pbAh) was, therefore, the ultimate Warner from the Lord to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah but they gave an adverse response to him. Instead of repenting, the people of Lot (pbAh) threatened him with dire consequences including turning Lot (pbAh) and his followers out of the town. The Qur'ān records the same as under:

³⁹⁴ 'obliterate' means: 'Root out; destroy completely'.

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ- إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ الْحَوْصُ لُوطُ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ- إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ- فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا- وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ- أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ- وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ.³⁹⁵

The people of Lut rejected the messengers. Behold, their brother Lut said to them: 'Will ye not fear (Allah)? 'I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust. 'So fear Allah and obey me. 'No reward do I ask of you for it: my reward is only from the lord of the Worlds. 'Of all the creatures in the world, will ye approach males, 'And leave those whom Allah has created for you to be your mates? Nay, ye are a people transgressing (all limits)!'³⁹⁶

The episode has been recounted in Surah al-'Ankabūt as follows:

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَأَنْتَؤُنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ- أَتَيْنَكُمْ لَنُتَزَكِّيَ لَكُمْ وَلَنُفَصِّلَنَّ السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيكُمْ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اتَّبِعْنَا بَعْدَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ- قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِينَ.³⁹⁷

And (remember) Lut: behold, he said to his people: 'Ye do commit lewdness, such as no people in Creation (ever) committed before you. 'Do ye indeed approach men, and cut off the highway? and practise wickedness (even) in your councils?' But his people gave no answer but this: they said: 'Bring us the Wrath of Allah if thou tellest the truth.' He said: 'O my Lord! help Thou me against people who do mischief!'³⁹⁸

Ultimately the Prophet had no option except to pray to the Lord for help as quoted above. The Lord accepted the prayer of Lot and destroyed all the transgressors but saved the Prophet, his household and the righteous ones with him. Lot's wife was the only exception to be left behind to meet her fate with the sinners.

³⁹⁵ Al-Qur'ān, al-Shu'arā: 26:160-166.

³⁹⁶ Tr. A. Yusuf Ali, al-Shu'arā: 26:160-166.

³⁹⁷ Al-Qur'ān, al-'Ankabūt: 29.28-30.

³⁹⁸ Tr. A. Yusuf Ali, al-'Ankabūt: 29.28-30.

d) Lot (pbAh) Saved with His Followers

We recall that before going to Sodom, the angels of the Lord had first come to Abraham (pbAh) who said to them:

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ- قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ- إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ- إِلَّا
امْرَأَتَهُ قَدَرْنَا لَهَا لَئِنْ الْغَابَرِينَ³⁹⁹

He said: And afterward what is your business, O ye messengers (of Allah)? They said: We have been sent unto a guilty folk, (All) save the family of Lot. Them we shall deliver everyone, Except his wife, of whom We had decreed that she should be of those who stay behind.⁴⁰⁰

Actually the Qur'ān has used the word 'أَجْمَعِينَ' which means 'all' to be saved. This shows that, with the exception of Lot's wife, the entire family of Lot (pbAh) consisting of Lot (pbAh), his sons, daughters and others were saved. It is worth noting here that the Qur'ān did not say that Lot (pbAh) was saved only with his two daughters. The term 'أَجْمَعِينَ' though provides no detail, yet the appellation is all-inclusive and may cover sons, daughters, sons-in-law, children, servants, adherents and perhaps animals and portables belonging to the household of Lot (pbAh) which might have been saved. This implies a non specified number of men, women, children and servants among the saved⁴⁰¹. The same also transpires from the following:

Though Abraham had yet no children, Lot had, and both their servants had children by their fellow servants born in their house which might well be numbered among Abram's and Lot' persons because they had an absolute dominion over them.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁹ Al-Qur'ān, al-Hijr: 15:57-60.

⁴⁰⁰ Al-Qur'ān, 15:57-60, tr. Pickthal.

⁴⁰¹ Gen. 13:5-7 & 19:3 and Al Qur'ān 15:59.

⁴⁰² Matthew Poole, *A Com. on the H. B.* (London, 1962), Gen. 12:5'

Since Lot (pbAh) had 'absolute dominion' over his servants and slaves, therefore, they formed his household and being his followers were among those who were saved.

Two more verses, i.e. Al Qur'ān 7:83 and 27:57, contain same wordings confirming that Lot (pbAh) was saved with his family.

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ-⁴⁰³

But we saved him and his family, except his wife: she was of those who lagged behind.⁴⁰⁴

Certain other verses of the Qur'ān also stress adherents of Lot (pbAh):

إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ- إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ قَدَرْنَا إِنَّهَا لَمِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ-⁴⁰⁵

Excepting the adherents of Lut: them we are certainly (charged) to save (from harm),- All.- Except his wife, who, We have ascertained, will be among those who will lag behind.⁴⁰⁶

إِذْ نَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ- إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ-⁴⁰⁷

Behold, We delivered him and his adherents, all Except an old woman who was among those who lagged behind.⁴⁰⁸

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ- قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطًا قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن فِيهَا لَنَنْجِيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ-⁴⁰⁹

When Our Messengers came to Abraham with the good news, they said: 'We are indeed going to destroy the people of this township; for truly they are (addicted to) crime.' He said: 'But there is Lut there.' They said: 'Well do we know who is there: we will certainly save him and his following, – except his wife: she is

⁴⁰³ Al Qur'ān 7:83 & 27:57.

⁴⁰⁴ Al Qur'ān 7:83 & 27:57, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁰⁵ Al-Qur'ān, 15:59-60.

⁴⁰⁶ Al-Qur'ān, 15:59-60, (tr. A. Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁰⁷ Al-Qur'ān, 37:134-135.

⁴⁰⁸ Al-Qur'ān, 37:134-135, (tr. A. Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁰⁹ Al-Qur'ān, 29:31, 32.

of those who lag behind!⁴¹⁰

It is pertinent to note here that whereas verses 29:32 and 15:59-60 quoted above emphasize the fact that all adherents of Lot (pbAh) were among the saved, we find that the angels while going to Sodom had told Abraham (pbAh) to save Lot (pbAh) and his following. This means among the saved were not merely two daughters of Lot (pbAh) as asserted in the Genesis but an unspecified number of his followers in addition to animals or portables belonging to the household of Lot (pbAh). Even the Genesis had recorded that Abraham (pbAh) was a rich man and Lot (pbAh) who went with him also had flocks and herds and tents⁴¹¹. Here GNB replaces 'tents' with 'servants', i.e: 'Lot also had sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as his own family and servants.'⁴¹² which may also be correct because it is affirmed that:

And there was a strife between herdsmen of Abraham and herdsmen of Lot.⁴¹³

So quarrels broke out between the men who took care of Abram's animals and those who took care of Lot's animals.⁴¹⁴

This shows that household of Lot (pbAh) definitely consisted of many herdsmen and perhaps their families in addition to the animals they had. Lot (pbAh) the exalted prophet of God was saved along with all his followers leaving no room for the pretension that he had to lead any secluded life with his daughters in the cave.

⁴¹⁰ Al-Qur'ān, 29:31, 32, (tr. A. Yusuf Ali).

⁴¹¹ Gen: 13:5 KJV:

And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

⁴¹² Gen: 13:5 GNB.

⁴¹³ Gen: 13:7A, KJV.

⁴¹⁴ Gen: 13:7A, KJV.

e) Moral Uprightness of Lot (pbAh)

Our Jewish and Christian brothers have tried to show Lot (pbAh) as a tragic buffoon and an unlucky nephew of Abraham (pbAh) who was lascivious⁴¹⁵ as well as greedy person. Due to his own bent of mind he willingly chose the sin-laden cities of Gomorrah and Sodom. They accuse him of meanness and other allegations suggesting his inclination to live in the company of the morally depraved people. He is criticized as a 'passive, foppish⁴¹⁶ and foolish person'. By ascribing misdeeds to him, they present an abhorrent conduct of Lot (pbAh). The Muslims, however, feel that all such allegations have no reality at all. Lot (pbAh) was a great prophet of the Lord and ranked with the most righteous of the prophets. He had no liking for transgression and sin as alleged by the expositors of the Bible. He detested sin and vehemently tried to reprove the sinners. Ultimately, finding no chance of improvement and in his utter disappointment from the people, he sought relief from the Almighty in the following words:

رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ- فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ-⁴¹⁷

'O my Lord! deliver me and my family from such things as they do!' So We delivered him and his family,- all.⁴¹⁸

Lot (pbAh), therefore, entreated the Lord for his salvation from the abominable things the people were doing there. The Lord certified that he delivered Lot (pbAh) and his family from the evil doers. Hence, only the Israelites had the arrogance to refute the word of God, alleging the prophets and their families with the sinful deeds. As against this the Qur'ān has emphatically

⁴¹⁵ 'lascivious' means: 'lustful'.

⁴¹⁶ At worst, Lot is criticized as, 'Passive, foppish, [and] foolish.' quotes, George W. 'Lot: a foil in Abraham's saga.' In *Understanding the World*, ed James T. Butler, Edgar W. Conrad, and Ben C. Ollenburger, 112, 32.

⁴¹⁷ Al-Qur'ān, 26:169-170.

⁴¹⁸ Al-Qur'ān, 26:169-170, (tr. A. Yusuf Ali).

asserted at so many times that the lord saved all adherents of Lot (pbAh). Lot (pbAh) being a foreigner in the sin laden towns had no following from the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Qur'ān asserts:

فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ⁴¹⁹

But we found not there any just (Muslim) persons except in one house.⁴²⁰

The house however may denote the entire household of Lot (pbAh). Even the relevant verses of Genesis give the impression that there might have been among the saved males as well as females belonging to the household of Lot (pbAh).

And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place.⁴²¹

The phrase 'whatsoever thou hast in the city' definitely covers the sons-in-law, the servants, animals and portables belonging to the household of Lot (pbAh). The Genesis records:

And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, who married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.⁴²²

This shows that aside from two daughters in the marriageable age, Lot (pbAh) also had two married daughters. May be his married daughters were saved including their children. If the said daughters were pregnant they might also have given birth to children even after the catastrophe. Having no knowledge about the same we can make no further comments.

⁴¹⁹ Al Qur'ān 51:36.

⁴²⁰ Al Qur'ān 51:36, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

⁴²¹ Gen 19:12 KJV.

⁴²² Gen 19:14 KJV.

It is of utmost importance to note the assertions of the Qur'ān at three different occasions that God saved the entire household of Lot (pbAh) with the exception of his wife. May be an undisclosed number of the sons of Lot (pbAh) were among the saved. In any case, we have no source to certify or deny that the sons of Lot (pbAh) were named Moab, Ben'ammi or Ammon.⁴²³ There are no convincing arguments to testify the Genesis' story of incest between Lot (pbAh) and his daughters. It has, in fact, no plausibility in it.

f) God always Saves the Righteous and Destroys the Sinners

As an unchanging tradition of the Lord, we know that whenever the people persisted in denying the prophets and rebelled against the Lord, they were chastised accordingly. In the event of a torment, however, the Lord always destroyed the evil-doers while he saved the prophet and his followers. It is, therefore, plausible to conclude that the entire household of Lot (pbAh) including his sons and slaves etc were saved with the only exception of his wife who was left behind with the sinners. As such, Lot's sons, daughters and his followers might have been saved only due to their righteousness. Had any of them been depraved⁴²⁴ like the wife of Lot (pbAh), the same might have been eliminated along with the sinners. This leads us to the conclusion that Lot (pbAh) as well as those saved with him were righteous and they had no inclination towards sin as alleged by the Genesis and the expositors of the Bible. The Qur'ān asserts:

وَلَوْ أَنَّا آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَعْمَلُ الْخَبَائِثَ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَاسِقِينَ-

⁴²³ Gen 19:37-38.

⁴²⁴ 'depraved' means: 'morally corrupt'.

And to Lut, too, We gave Judgment and Knowledge, and We saved him from the town which practised abominations: truly they were a people given to Evil, a rebellious people.⁴²⁶

When the Lord himself certifies in the Qur'ān about 2500 years after Lot (pbAh) that He saved him from the town which practised abominations, there should be no doubt that Lot (pbAh) and the members of his family lived righteously ever after the catastrophe. Had there been any truth in the story of incest or any other perversion in them, it would have been futile on the part of God to certify them as those saved from abominations. God's declaration had no sense if he saved Lot (pbAh) and his adherents from the sin-laden cities only to provide them a secluded place to practise another abomination more grievous than that was prevailing in Sodom and Gomorrah. In such an event, the Qur'ān would have confirmed that even Lot (pbAh) and his family were destroyed subsequently. Since the Qur'ān asserts that Lot (pbAh) and his family was saved from the place that worked abomination, therefore, it absolves the family from any misconduct. It also refutes the allegation of the Genesis that Lot (pbAh) was inclined to sinfulness by revealing that Lot (pbAh) himself implored to the Lord:

رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ- فَنجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ- إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ⁴²⁷

'O my Lord! deliver me and my family from such things as they do!' So We delivered him and his family,- all Except an old woman who lingered behind.⁴²⁸

Lot (pbAh) therefore abhorred the immoral practice of his people. Finding no possibility of any improvement, he himself prayed to

⁴²⁵ Al-Qur'ān, 21:74.

⁴²⁶ Al-Qur'ān, 21:74, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

⁴²⁷ Al-Qur'ān, 26:169-171.

⁴²⁸ Al-Qur'ān, 26:169-171, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

the Lord to deliver him and his family from such bad deeds which they were performing. It shows that either the writers of the Genesis were completely ignorant of the facts or they intentionally omitted all other persons who had been saved only to isolate Lot (pbAh) with his daughters to provide him a safe and secluded atmosphere to accomplish the heinous act of incest. The Israelites had developed an inclination to invent and to propagate different calumnies against their rivals only to humiliate them. They felt free to spoil the image of others only because they had no perception of life after death, nor they believed in any retribution on the Day of Judgment. Having no fear of any accountability in the hereafter, the Israelites always had a free hand to stigmatize their opponents as well as their ancestors. This is what happened in the case of Lot (pbAh) as well.

Chapter-10

Ch-10. Blasphemy Cursed by the Lord

a) False Accusation Warrants Severe Punishment

God had commanded the Israelites to stay away from false accusation, false witness and murder of an innocent person as noted below:

Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. (...).Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.⁴²⁹

Severe punishment has also been suggested for the false accusers:

If any of you try to harm another by false accusations, both of you are to go to the one place of worship and be judged by the priests and judges who are then in office. The judges will investigate the case thoroughly; and if you have made a false accusation, you are to receive the punishment the accused would have received. In this way, your nation will get rid of this evil. Then everyone else will hear what happened; they will be afraid, and no one will ever again do such an evil thing. In such cases show no mercy; the punishment is to be a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ Exo 23:1,7 KJV.

⁴³⁰ Deu 19:16-21 GNB.

In spite of all this, the Bible has numerous instances of black painting the Patriarchs, the Prophets and their families, especially those who were rivals of the Israelites. Since the temporal punishment could be awarded only to those who could be produced before the priests or the judges, therefore, the authors of such accusations had no fear of any punishment for alleging calumny to those who had died centuries before them and had no chance to sue their accusers. Islam, however, declares calumny⁴³¹ as a heinous crime which is cursed by the Lord. It is punishable here on earth and also in the hereafter. As such, if the scandal-monger escaped punishment during his life he is bound to receive proper retribution in the life to come. Some of the relevant verses from the Qur'ān are quoted below:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ-432

Verily, as for those who like [to hear] foul slander spread against [any of] those who have attained to faith - grievous suffering awaits them in this world and in the life to come: for God knows [the full truth], whereas you know [it] not. ⁴³³

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَزْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعِنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ-434

[But,] verily, those who [falsely, and without repentance,] accuse chaste women who may have been unthinkingly careless but have remained true to their faith, shall be rejected [from God's grace] in this world as well as in the life to come: and awesome suffering awaits them) Those who slander chaste women, indiscreet but believing, are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter: for them is a

⁴³¹ The term 'calumny' signifies: 'slander; malicious, false, and injurious statement about a person; false oral defamation; libel'.

⁴³² Al-Qur'ān, 24:19.

⁴³³ Allamah Asad: '*The Message*', 24:19.

⁴³⁴ Al-Qur'ān, 24:23.

grievous Penalty,⁴³⁵

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدْ احْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا-⁴³⁶

And as for those who malign believing men and believing women without their having done any wrong - they surely burden themselves with the guilt of calumny, and [thus] with a flagrant sin!⁴³⁷

وَالَّذِينَ يَزْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ-⁴³⁸

And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations),- flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after: for such men are wicked transgressors;,⁴³⁹

It is clear from the above that those who fail to adduce the required evidence to prove the accusation of fornication are to be flogged with eighty stripes. Aside from the stripes the accuser is disqualified permanently to appear as a witness in any other judicial matter till his death. Although it has been a trifling matter for the Israelites to scandalize their opponents, yet the same is a serious crime in the sight of the Lord. Consequently, when some hypocrites levelled an unfounded allegation against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah, the wife of the Prophet (pbAh), God revealed the following verses for the guidance of the Prophet (pbAh) and the people for all times to come:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ-⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁵ Allamah Asad: 'The Message', 24:23.

⁴³⁶ Al-Qur'ān, 33:58.

⁴³⁷ Allamah Asad: 'The Message', 33:58.

⁴³⁸ Al-Qur'ān, 24:4.

⁴³⁹ Al-Qur'ān, 24:4, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁴⁰ Al-Qur'ān, 24:11.

Those who brought forward the lie are a body among yourselves: think it not to be an evil to you; On the contrary it is good for you: to every man among them (will come the punishment) of the sin that he earned, and to him who took on himself the lead among them, will be a penalty grievous.⁴⁴¹

The Lord interrogates the believers that:

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ. لَوْلَا جَاءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَاءِ فَقُوْلُكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُمْ الْكَاذِبُونَ. وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ. إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسِبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ. وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ. يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ. وَيُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ.⁴⁴²

Why did not the believers - men and women - when ye heard of the affair, - put the best construction on it in their own minds and say, 'This (charge) is an obvious lie'? Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it? When they have not brought the witnesses, such men, in the sight of Allah, (stand forth) themselves as liars! Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, in this world and the Hereafter, a grievous penalty would have seized you in that ye rushed glibly into this affair. Behold, ye received it on your tongues, and said out of your mouths things of which ye had no knowledge; and ye thought it to be a light matter, while it was most serious in the sight of Allah. And why did ye not, when ye heard it, say? - 'It is not right of us to speak of this: Glory to Allah! this is a most serious slander!' Allah doth admonish you, that ye may never repeat such (conduct), if ye are (true) Believers. And Allah makes the Signs plain to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.⁴⁴³

It is evident from the above that false accusation earns displeasure of the Lord. It must not go unpunished. Those who escape penalty here on earth are sure to be punished in the

⁴⁴¹ Al-Qur'ān, 24:11, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁴² Al-Qur'ān, 24:12-18.

⁴⁴³ Al-Qur'ān, 24:12-18, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

hereafter. This shows that aside from bringing a change in the apparent life of the believers Islam stresses more to change the inside feelings and thoughts of men. This is called 'Tazkiyah al-Nafs' in which no other Prophet succeeded in the manner Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) did succeed. He brought a revolutionary change in the thought and work of his companions. Muhāammad (pbAh) therefore, was the only Prophet of the Lord who succeeded to establish the kingdom of God on earth by inculcating God consciousness in his companions which changed entire setup and the moral behavior of the believers. He succeeded to establish a God-fearing and righteous society the like of which never existed any where else before or after him. The Lord himself appreciated it in the following words:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ
الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا هُمْ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ-444

Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.⁴⁴⁴

It is conspicuous to note that no other community ever won such approbation from the Lord. It must be noted with care that Almighty Allah did not approve the followers of the Holy Prophet merely on the basis of their region, color, blood line or the race. It was due to their firm faith in Almighty Allah and righteous conduct that the Sovereign Lord counted them among the best of the Peoples. The approbation, therefore, could never be a source of pride even for the earliest followers of the Holy Prophet nor could it be used as a basis to denounce others. On the other hand, the

⁴⁴⁴ Al-Qur'ān, 3:110.

⁴⁴⁵ Al-Qur'ān, 3:110, tr A Yusuf Ali.

Muslims are obliged to strive hard to keep themselves to the mark failing which their neglect of duty may deprive them of the grace. They have to keep in mind the commandments of the Lord such as:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ-446

BEHOLD, God enjoins justice, and the doing of good, and generosity towards [one's] fellowmen; and He forbids all that is shameful and all that runs counter to reason, as well as envy; [and] He exhorts you [repeatedly] so that you might bear [all this] in mind.⁴⁴⁷

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ جَارِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا (....) - 448

O you who have attained to faith! Turn unto God in sincere repentance: it may well be that your Sustainer will efface from you your bad deeds, and will admit you into gardens through which running waters flow, (...).⁴⁴⁹

وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ-450

and that there might grow out of you a community [of people] who invite unto all that is good, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong: and it is they, they who shall attain to a happy state!⁴⁵¹

The Muslims, therefore, had never been under the misconception that being the chosen people of the Lord, they are immune from their accountability before the Lord nor they

⁴⁴⁶ Al-Qur'ān, 16:90.

⁴⁴⁷ Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 16:90.

⁴⁴⁸ Al-Qur'ān, 66:8.

⁴⁴⁹ Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 66:8.

⁴⁵⁰ Al-Qur'ān, 3:104.

⁴⁵¹ Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 3:104.

think that they can be saved through intercession of anyone else unless and until they have firm faith in God and obey all His commandments meticulously. The Qur'ān is quite explicit on the subject:

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ-⁴⁵²

[For,] would We treat those who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds in the same manner as [We shall treat] those who spread corruption on earth? Would We treat the God-conscious in the same manner as the wicked?⁴⁵³

أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ-⁴⁵⁴

Shall We then treat the People of Faith like the People of Sin?⁴⁵⁵

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ-⁴⁵⁶

Did you, then, think that We created you in mere idle play, and that you would not have to return to Us?⁴⁵⁷

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَن يُتْرَكَ سُدًى-⁴⁵⁸

DOES MAN, then, think that he is to be left to himself to go about at will?⁴⁵⁹

Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)?⁴⁶⁰

In view of the commandments of the Lord quoted above, let the people of the book reconsider their claims for salvation,

⁴⁵² Al-Qur'ān, 38:28.

⁴⁵³ Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 38:28.

⁴⁵⁴ Al-Qur'ān, 68:35.

⁴⁵⁵ Al-Qur'ān, 68:35, A. Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁵⁶ Al-Qur'ān, 23:115.

⁴⁵⁷ Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 23:115.

⁴⁵⁸ Al-Qur'ān, 75:36.

⁴⁵⁹ Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 75:36.

⁴⁶⁰ Al-Qur'ān, 75:36, A. Yusuf Ali.

holiness and life everlasting based on holiness of their race or intercession of some saviour other than God.

Since the infliction of the unfounded allegations and their repetition is a great crime against the Lord, therefore, the Israelites must realize the consequences of putting a blemish on a great Prophet of the Lord. Continuation of the propagation of the calumny, therefore, enhances the punishment of the inventors thereof. It is, therefore, high time that the false allegation of incest against Lot (pbAh) and Judah and blemish of sexual assault by David (pbAh) and Solomon (pbAh) may be expunged from the Holy Book. Those who live must repent and seek forgiveness of the Lord for believing in such slanders against the exalted prophets of the Lord.

The Israelites must also realize that Publishing or broadcasting the scandals warrants a severe penalty from the Lord. Those who do so follow the footsteps of Satan.

إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ زُؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُواتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُواتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ- وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ-⁴⁶¹

19) Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows, and ye know not. 20) Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, and that Allah is full of kindness and mercy, (ye would be ruined indeed). 21) O ye who believe! follow not Satan's footsteps: if any will follow the footsteps of Satan, he will (but) command what is shameful and wrong: and were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, not one of you would ever have been pure: but Allah doth purify whom He

⁴⁶¹ Al-Qur'ān, 24.19-22.

pleases: and Allah is One Who hears and knows (all things). 22) Let not those among you who are endued with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen, those in want, and those who have left their homes in Allah's cause: let them forgive and overlook, do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
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It is, therefore, advisable not to take the risk of imputing⁴⁶³ calumny to win the curse of the Lord. Slandering the people is a heinous crime to be punished severely by the Lord. God says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَزْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لَعُنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ- يَوْمَ نَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ- يَوْمَئِذٍ يُؤْفِكُهُمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ⁴⁶⁴

Those who slander chaste women, indiscreet but believing, are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter: for them is a grievous Penalty,- On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions. On that Day Allah will pay them back (all) their just dues, and they will realise that Allah is the (very) Truth, that makes all things manifest.⁴⁶⁵

There is ample evidence to the fact that the authors and most of the expositors of the Bible present a tarnished figure of Lot (pbAh). One faction, however, insists that Lot (pbAh) like his 'Uncle Abe' is perfect and pious. Some Christian traditions also regard Lot (pbAh) as a 'righteous man' in the words of Peter, who likens him to Noah (pbAh) and argues that the rescue of Lot (pbAh) and his family from Sodom is a sign of God's willingness to 'deliver

⁴⁶² Al-Qur'ān, 24.19-22, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁶³ 'impute (to)' means: 'attribute, ascribe (righteousness, guilt, etc.) to (a person); blame on; assign to; attribute to'.

⁴⁶⁴ Al-Qur'ān, 24.23-25.

⁴⁶⁵ Al-Qur'ān, 24.19-25, tr. A. Yusuf Ali.

the Godly out of temptations' (2 Peter. 2:7-9 Scofield KJV). As against this most of the Jewish as well as the Christian writers continue to present an abhorrent conduct of Lot (pbAh). Marcus Dods D.D, a renowned expositor of the Bible for example, has devoted a substantial part of his chapters IX, X, XIV, XV on the Genesis to denounce the conduct of Lot (pbAh).⁴⁶⁶ His work is mostly an imaginative depiction of what Lot (pbAh), as a bad man, might have thought and done in the distant past. Dods, therefore, is likely to receive his proper retribution from the Lord for depicting Lot (pbAh) as greedy, selfish and contemptible man having narrowness of soul, and living for money, 'who glories in his shame'. On his final return to Allah, Dr. Dods will have to prove the allegations against Lot (pbAh) or suffer the consequences for blemishing the glorious conduct of the prophet of the Lord.

In Rabbinical literature, Lot (pbAh) is presented as 'lascivious' person and it is suggested that he chose to settle in Sodom precisely because he was attracted by 'the ribald goings-on'. All such remarks are merely the production of hatred against Lot (pbAh) and have no truth in it. It would have been more appropriate for the Israelites as well as the Christians to avoid the curse of the Lord quoted above.⁴⁶⁷ They earn the curse by publishing unfounded accusations against the Prophets without having adequate knowledge or proof for the same. The Lord will not let the wicked transgressors to go unpunished for their malignant imputation to many of the exalted Prophets and their families with baseless accusations against them. No wonder that the Lord has already punished the Israelites repeatedly in

⁴⁶⁶ MARCUS DODS, *The Expositor's Bible, Genesis* (New York, A. C. Armstrong and Son 1903).

⁴⁶⁷ Al-Qur'ān 24:23.

the past yet there awaits them full and final retribution on the Day of Judgment.

b) Lot (pbAh) Resolute and Righteous in his Conduct

The Bible goes to such an extent that it depicts Lot (pbAh) so shameless, base, and timid as to make to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah the following offer:

7) And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. 8) Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.⁴⁶⁸

It is absolutely unbecoming of a resolute and righteous person, not to say of a prophet to offer his own daughters in this way. How brazenly the Israelites have put the words '*and do ye to them as is good in your eyes*' in Lot's mouth. No father could throw off his virgin daughters before the scoundrels in this way. Only the Israelites could conceive of attributing such depravities to the ancestors of their enemies. As regards the story it is correct only to the extent that the angels visited Lot (pbAh) and finding the mob bent on sexual violence, they destroyed the sin-laden cities.

The actual situation might have been quite different from that described by the OT. Lot (pbAh), as a Prophet of the Almighty, resolutely rejected their demand and advised the people not to violate the natural process and to restrain themselves to their wives whom he called his daughters. All the addressees of a prophet are his sons and daughters; and, of course, his two actual daughters were also married to two of those people.

⁴⁶⁸ Gen 19:7-8 KJV.

Prophets and pious elders are just fathers to the community. Even the Christians venerate their saints, pontiffs and priests by addressing them as their fathers. Wives of the prophets are just like mothers of the believers. Similarly the daughters of the community were the daughters of Lot the prophet. Instead of his own daughters, Lot advised the mob to go to the women in the community in the lawful manner.

Ever since the story of incest found its place in the Holy Book the Rabbis continued to tarnish the image of Lot (pbAh). The Christian scholars, too, have followed the Jews to present an abhorrent conduct of Lot (pbAh) by attributing many other imaginary vices to him.

c) Lot (pbAh); A Messenger and a Prophet

We discussed earlier that the Bible does not accept Lot (pbAh) as a Prophet. It has nothing good to describe about Lot (pbAh). Ever since the Bible's allegation that Lot (pbAh) chose well watered Jordan valley he has been shown as a greedy and selfish person interested only in the better pastures for his sheep and cattle. On the other hand Lot (pbAh) is specifically mentioned in the Qur'ān as a selfless and a devoted servant of the Lord. In addition to verses 29:28-32 quoted earlier, the readers may find further details about Lot's mission and conduct in the following:

Al Qur'ān 6:86; 7:80-84; 11:73-83; 15:57-77; 21:74-75; 26:160-175; 26:54-58; 29:22; 28-35; 38:133-138; 51:31-37; 54:33-39; 11:81; 15:60; and 56:10.

Going through the verses of the Qur'ān detailed above, the reader can have a full glimpse of the glorious character, conduct, and assignment of Lot (pbAh). For ready reference, however, we quote only the following.

وَلَوْطًا آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَعْمَلُ الْفَبَائِثَ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَاسَقِينَ-
وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ-469

AND UNTO Lot, too, We vouchsafed sound judgment and knowledge [of right and wrong], and saved him from that community which was given to deeds of abomination. [We destroyed those people - for,] verily, they were people lost in evil, depraved - whereas him We admitted unto Our grace: for, behold, he was among the righteous.⁴⁷⁰

Lot (pbAh) has been mentioned in the ranks of the greatest prophets of the Lord in verse 6:83 to 86.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ- وَبَلَّغْنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ- وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ- وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِّن الصَّالِحِينَ- وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُوسُفَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ-471

Those who have attained to faith, and who have not obscured their faith by wrongdoing - it is they who shall be secure, since it is they who have found the right path! 6:83 And this was Our argument which We vouchsafed unto Abraham against his people: [for] We do raise by degrees whom We will. Verily, thy Sustainer is wise, all-knowing. 6:84 - 232 - And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; and We guided each of them as We had guided Noah aforetime. And out of his offspring, [We bestowed prophethood upon] David, and Solomon, and Job, and Joseph, and Moses, and Aaron: for thus do We reward the doers of good; (85) and [upon] Zachariah, and John, and Jesus, and Elijah: every one of them was of the righteous; (86) and [upon] Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah, and Lot. And every one of them did We favour above other people;⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁹ Al-Qur'ān, 21:74-75.

⁴⁷⁰ Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 21:74-75.

⁴⁷¹ Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 6:83- 87.

⁴⁷² Allamah Asad, *The Message* 6:83- 87.

Thus verses 85-87 quoted above, rank Lot (pbAh) among the greatest prophets such as Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Moses v and Jesus (pbAh), i.e. those who have been exalted above all the nations. Lot (pbAh) was saved from the town which practised abomination only because he hated the same and he himself prayed to the Lord to get rid of them. As such those who try to falsify the word of God, rebel against Him. Those are the people who have no fear of the Lord and are not scared of their accountability on the Day of Judgment.

According to Genesis, the daughters of Lot (pbAh) had themselves witnessed the most horrible destruction of the evil-doers. The horror of such a torment must have kept them trembling for a long time thereafter. It was, therefore, impossible for the daughters of Lot (pbAh) to ignore the retribution, while the smoldering lands were still in their sight. People learning no lessons from the chastisement deserve at least double punishment as compared to others. God is an unchanging God and He shows no partiality to anyone. In case, Lot (pbAh) or his daughters had resorted to the incestuous relations even after seeing the devastation of the cities as well as the sinners, God would have destroyed them there and then. In such a case there could be no chance of their survival or appreciation of their conduct by the Lord. We therefore strongly condemn those who scandalize the exalted prophets of the Lord. We also pray to the Lord to bless Lot (pbAh), his adherents and all his followers abundantly.

Chapter-11

Ch-11. Stories Disqualifying the Edomites

The Israelites claim themselves to be the first born sons of God⁴⁷³ and also the only people of God. Being an ethnic community, it was intolerable for them to share their God or the blessings⁴⁷⁴ as well as the land promised to Abraham (pbAh) and his descendants⁴⁷⁵ with others. To assert their exclusive rights and propriety on the blessings of the Lord and the Land of Canaan, they consciously fabricated stories ascribing illegitimacy to all genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh) except the Israelites. The curse of Noah (pbAh) on Canaan, illegitimacy of the Moabites and the Ammonites, slavery and social ex-communication alleged to Hagar, Ishmael (pbAh) and their descendants, transaction of the birthright between Esau and Jacob (pbAh) and deflection⁴⁷⁶ of the blessings of Isaac (pbAh) to

⁴⁷³ Exo 4:22:

And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, *Israel is my son, even my firstborn*: [stress added].

⁴⁷⁴ Gen 12:2-3:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (KJV)

⁴⁷⁵ Gen 12:7.

⁴⁷⁶ 'Deflection' means: 'deviation, bend'.

Jacob (pbAh) instead of Esau reflect the same goal of the Israelites. In their eagerness to assert their supremacy over other nations the priests, the sages and the scribes of the Israelites started concocting stories to denigrate⁴⁷⁷ them. The said process started sometime during or after the reign of Solomon (pbAh) and continued perhaps till the fourth century B.C.

After dispensing with the Canaanites, the Ishmaelites, the Moabites and the Ammonites as discussed earlier, the Israelites had to tackle the descendants of Esau, i.e. the Edomites who had been holding a substantial part of land on the eastern flank of the Israelites and continued to be a constant menace to them for a long time. Since they were the descendants of Esau, the elder brother of Jacob (Israel), therefore, aside from subduing them militarily, the Israelites planned to debar them from claiming any parity of rights with the Israelites. This led to propagation of their slavery based on a curse attributed to Isaac (pbAh) the father of Esau and Jacob (pbAh).

According to the Genesis Rebecca, the wife of Isaac (pbAh) had no children for about 20 years:

Because Rebecca had no children, Isaac prayed to the LORD for her. The LORD answered his prayer, and Rebecca became pregnant. She was going to have twins, and before they were born, they struggled against each other in her womb. She said, 'Why should something like this happen to me?' So she went to ask the LORD for an answer. The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are within you; You will give birth to two rival peoples. One will be stronger than the other; *The older will serve the younger* [stress added].' The time came for her to give birth, and she had twin sons. The first one was reddish, and his skin was like a hairy robe, so he was named Esau. The second one was born holding on tightly to the heel of Esau, so he was named Jacob. Isaac was

⁴⁷⁷ 'Denigrate' means: 'defame the reputation of a person'.

sixty years old when they were born.⁴⁷⁸

Although the Israelites did not know even the name of the God of Abraham (pbAh)⁴⁷⁹, nor any fixed place was assigned to Him, yet, instead of Isaac (pbAh) the prophet, Rebecca had the direct approach to the Lord who told her the older (Esau or his descendants) will serve the younger (Jacob) denoting the Israelites.

The readers may note that the story as narrated above has no characteristics of a revelation. Besides an unnatural depiction of facts, it is merely a report from an unknown source because according to most of the scholars, no part of Genesis could be composed earlier than 900 years after the time of Abraham (pbAh) and Isaac (pbAh). Most probably, the piece quoted above might have been inserted into the Genesis much later than the reign of King David (pbAh) and Solomon (pbAh) when the rivalries between the Israelites and the Edomites were at peak. Anyhow, it is worth noting here that another name of Esau, the elder among the twin brothers was Edom due to which his descendants were called Edomites.

It seems that the Israelites had started feeling the utmost need to denounce the nations in contention with them even before the fall of Judah (587 B.C.) and the same continued for a long time thereafter. Their prophets started expressing their bitter hatred against them. Edom had rejoiced over the fall of Judah, due to which it was said:

Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked. The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no

⁴⁷⁸ Gen 25:21-26 GNB.

⁴⁷⁹ Exo 3:13.

more carry thee away into captivity: he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins.⁴⁸⁰

There is another prediction as noted below:

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.⁴⁸¹

As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD.⁴⁸²

Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.⁴⁸³

Jeremiah is more conspicuous among the prophets of the Israelites because he embarked on the plan of predictions for wholesale denunciation and destruction of nations such as Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, people of Damascus, Kedar and Babylon. His long prediction about Edom included the following:

Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him. (...).But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret

⁴⁸⁰ Lam 4:21-22 KJV.

⁴⁸¹ Eze 25:12-14 KJV.

⁴⁸² Eze 35:15 KJV.

⁴⁸³ Joe 3:19 KJV.

places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not. (...). For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.⁴⁸⁴ (...). Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it. (...). Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them. (...). Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.⁴⁸⁵

The predictions of the prophets quoted above indicate the need and the time to denounce the Edomites. It occurred after the fall of Judah but the concocted curse was inserted into the Genesis with a retrospective effect from the time of Isaac (pbAh). The first insertion aimed at debarring the Edomites to claim any share from the inheritance of Isaac (pbAh). The second allegation was more serious than the first one. It meant not only to deprive the Edomites from blessings of the Lord but also to make them slaves of Israelites so that they may not claim any parity of rights with the Israelites.

Here is a summary of the same:

1. Esau being the first born of Isaac (pbAh), had himself sold out his birthright to Jacob (pbAh).⁴⁸⁶ Due to the said transaction between the brothers, the descendants of Esau were left with no

⁴⁸⁴ What a revengeful, ferocious, and furious God!

⁴⁸⁵ Jer 49:7-22 KJV.

⁴⁸⁶ Gen 25:27-34.

legal rights to claim anything from the inheritance of Abraham (pbAh) or Isaac (pbAh).

2. Although Isaac (pbAh) intended to confer his blessings on Esau but Rebecca and Jacob (pbAh) succeeded to deflect the said blessings to Jacob (pbAh) through falsehood, misrepresentation and fraud.⁴⁸⁷

a) Sale of the Birthright

The so-called sale of birth right between Esau and Jacob (pbAh) has been recorded as under:

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilled hunter, a man who loved the outdoors, but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home. Isaac preferred Esau, because he enjoyed eating the animals Esau killed, but Rebecca preferred Jacob. One day while Jacob was cooking some bean soup, Esau came in from hunting. He was hungry. and said to Jacob, 'I'm starving; give me some of that red stuff.' (That is why he was named Edom.) Jacob answered, 'I will give it to you if you give me your rights as the first-born son.' Esau said, 'All right! I am about to die; what good will my rights do me?' Jacob answered, 'First make a vow that you will give me your rights.' Esau made the vow and gave his rights to Jacob. Then Jacob gave him some bread and some of the soup. He ate and drank and then got up and left. That was all Esau cared about his rights as the first-born son.⁴⁸⁸

Instead of a revelation, the episode quoted above can be more acceptable as a bedtime story for the little ones. Besides ignoring the entire background of the family, true circumstances at the moment, it lacks all natural contents of purchase or sale described in it. Taken for granted that the

⁴⁸⁷ Gen Chapter 27.

⁴⁸⁸ Gen 25:27-34.

transaction actually took place in the manner narrated in the Genesis, it can be termed as immoral and criminal exploitation of one brother at the hand of the other. In view of this no sane person except the Jews and the Christians can appreciate the callous and treacherous act of Jacob (pbAh) against his brother. No legal sanctity can be attached to such criminal acts. In spite of all this, the expositors of the Bible; Jews as well as the Christians show no disgust for the immoral stunt of Jacob (pbAh). Instead of despising the misdemeanor of Jacob (pbAh), they excel each other to blame Esau by various self-concocted aspersions⁴⁸⁹.

Actually there is no credibility in the myth of Jacob's purchasing the rights of the first born from Esau. The birthright being bestowed by the Lord cannot be considered as transferable or a saleable commodity as pretended by the composer of the Genesis. Even otherwise, no such fratricide is permissible in any civil society worth the name. The so-called sale of birth right has no parallel in the history of the world.

The inherent defects in the story make it incredible for the readers. Even the narrative of the Bible and different comments of the expositors show Esau as a ferocious hunter with great strength. In view of this Jacob (pbAh) an easy going domesticated person could not have dared to transact any sale deed with the first born who already enjoyed double share in the joint family sources from which Jacob (pbAh) was preparing the bean soup. Other questions besides the above are as under:

1. Jacob (pbAh) and Esau were sons of Isaac (pbAh), admittedly a very rich man who inherited enormous wealth and herds belonging to Abraham (pbAh). Aside from milk products, honey and

⁴⁸⁹ 'aspersion' means: 'slander; false insinuation'.

dates, they must be having numerous other eatables at home. How then could bean soup be the only thing to eat?

2. Both Abraham (pbAh) and Isaac (pbAh) had a large number of herdsmen with their families to serve them. Where was the need for Jacob (pbAh) to cook the beans himself instead of some servant male or female within the household?

3. The expositors of the Bible present Esau as a lawless and wicked person with great strength. If so, why Esau did not revoke his woe? Being a strong hunter, why didn't he force Jacob (pbAh) to return his rights?

4. While Esau had always been the favorite of Isaac (pbAh), there is nothing to tell us that Rebecca had anything against him prior to his alleged marriage with Hittite girls. Even if Jacob (pbAh) was the favorite of Rebecca, there was no provision of law to deprive the first born from his rightful share by hook or by crook. Both Rebecca and Isaac (pbAh) lived for a long time after the so called sale of the birth right. Why didn't they interfere to rectify the wrong done to Esau?

In the absence of adequate answers to the above, we find the entire story as a mere fabrication by the Israelites than the revelation from the Lord.

b) Deflection⁴⁹⁰ of the blessings

According to the common belief, God always had constant, unaltering and eternal laws of justice and morality. God, therefore, cannot be expected to show partiality to anyone nor can He side with any favorites in the world. God being the sovereign Lord and omnipotent ruler of the universe has absolute dominion over his creatures and all forces of the nature. Hence, no one can force the hand of God nor blessings

⁴⁹⁰ 'Deflection' means: 'deviation; bending'.

can be deflected from one to the other merely by telling lies or by deceiving one's blind, old and bedridden father as narrated in the case of Isaac (pbAh). The story of depriving Esau from the blessings of his father and diverting the same from Esau to Jacob (pbAh) has been noted below:

And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison⁴⁹¹; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury⁴⁹² meat for thy father, such as he loveth: And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.⁴⁹³ And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me,

⁴⁹¹ 'Venison' means: 'the flesh of a deer'.

⁴⁹² 'Savoury' means: 'appetizing to the taste or smell; pungent or salty to the taste'.

⁴⁹³ Is it like the wife of a prophet to betray her husband and frustrate his plans? Is it God who decides to bless and choose someone as His prophet or is He helpless in this matter; and it is to be decided through a blind allocation of the blessing by someone else and God's design can be foiled by some tricky person? Doesn't this appointment need to be made on some merit?

and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son:⁴⁹⁴ And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me.⁴⁹⁵ *And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not* [stress added].⁴⁹⁶ And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.⁴⁹⁷ And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.⁴⁹⁸ And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may

⁴⁹⁴ Was Isaac (pbAh) so stupid as not to have been able to recognize the goat skin and distinguish between a man's skin and a hairy skin of a goat's kid? There is a saying in Persian 'Darūgh gū'ae rā hāfīzah na bāshad', i.e. 'a liar has no memory or intellect'. Only a stupid can believe this tricky fabrication.

⁴⁹⁵ It is a matter of pity that such a liar and cheater is going to be blessed; and neither the prophet detects such a heinous and far-reaching treachery nor the Lord traces it and intervenes to let the justice prevail.

⁴⁹⁶ Although Isaac (pbAh) had some genuine doubt about the identity of Esau, yet he could not discover the treachery and was easily and stupidly entrapped and cheated.

⁴⁹⁷ How stupid Isaac (pbAh) had been to be cheated so indiscreetly?

⁴⁹⁸ Jacob (pbAh) is repeatedly telling lies. Can such a blatant and brazen liar be conferred upon such a responsible position?

bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.⁴⁹⁹ And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.⁵⁰⁰ And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what

⁴⁹⁹ IF Isaac (pbAh) was blind, God was not. He is always there to enforce His design. Had it been the design of God to bless Esau, and had it been based on some genuine merit nobody could have frustrated it. There are so many in-built flaws in this story that no sane and analytic mind could accept.

⁵⁰⁰ How modest and chivalrous is Esau as not asking to snatch the blessing from Jacob (pbAh)! He only asks to be blessed along with his brother.

shall I do now unto thee, my son?⁵⁰¹ And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.⁵⁰² And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother;⁵⁰³ and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.⁵⁰⁴

The above excerpt shows that the long story ends in the curse of Isaac (pbAh) on Esau which denotes the slavery of his descendants, i.e. Edomites before the Israelites. There are reasons to believe that instead of being true revelation the above episode is a blatant fabrication of the Israelites. The narrative as such goes less against Esau and his descendants than Jacob (pbAh) and the Israelites. In their eagerness to degrade the Edomites, they in fact have assassinated the pious character of Jacob (pbAh); the righteous prophet of the Lord.

The Qur'ān has affirmed the piety and righteousness of Jacob (pbAh) repeatedly. There is nothing to support the view that the

⁵⁰¹ Was this blessing such a fateful destiny that even the blessing Isaac (pbAh) and Almighty God was unable to repair or rectify it to deliver justice to the deserving person? What stupid acts and teachings have been ascribed to such great patriarchs!

⁵⁰² The above observation is aptly recorded once again: 'How modest and chivalrous is Esau as not asking to snatch the blessing from Jacob (pbAh)! He only asks to be blessed along with his brother.' What a cruel father as not to concede such a genuine and fair request of his deserving son bereft of his genuine rights through the trickery and treachery of his own brazen brother! Is it conceivable of the prophets of Isaac (pbAh) and Jacob (pbAh)'s calibre and the progenitors of the whole race of the Israelites?

⁵⁰³ How cruel and helpless Isaac (pbAh) is to make the treacherous traitor and deceiver Jacob (pbAh) [May God forgive the writer to note such ugly and blasphemous words regarding so great prophets; but it is the natural result of the nasty writings of the authors of the Bible!] the master of Esau who was the really deserving person of the blessings!

⁵⁰⁴ Gen 27:1-40 KJV.

Lord chose him as a prophet on the basis of his falsehood, treachery or misrepresentation before his father. Almighty Allah chose Jacob (pbAh) on merit and bestowed His blessings on him and his descendants as predetermined by Him. God had always been competent enough to impose and enforce His will independently. He needs no help either through deception or fraud of Jacob (pbAh), Rebecca or anyone else. Even otherwise, it is possible to assume the infirmity of Isaac (pbAh) due to his ailing health and old age but it is impossible to think that Jacob (pbAh) or Rebecca could have succeeded to frustrate the will of all-knowing, all-wise God by hoodwinking Him through treachery, falsehood or fraud.

Bible depicts Isaac (pbAh) as a feeble, inactive, and infirm person due to which his wife Rebecca and his son Jacob (pbAh) succeeded in deceiving him. Reportedly, they frustrated the plan of Isaac (pbAh) to bless Esau, and got the blessings deflected from Esau to Jacob (pbAh). Although the Israelites feel no embarrassment while narrating the story of falsehood, deception and fraud on the part of Jacob (pbAh) and his mother⁵⁰⁵ yet to alleviate the guilt, they have tried to show that the event was divinely predetermined to take this very shape.

⁵⁰⁵ It has been recorded in Gen. 25:27-34:

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

and Gen. 27.

Such a concept should be strongly rejected because God is an unchanging god and His standard of morality and justice remains the same forever:

'He is great and mighty and He is to be feared.'

'He does not show partiality to anyone and He also does not accept bribes'⁵⁰⁶.

In view of this:

'God must stop judging unjustly' and

He 'must no longer be a party to the wicked deeds'.⁵⁰⁷ God must also 'rescue them from power of the wicked'⁵⁰⁸

Had Jacob (pbAh) behaved in the manner narrated by the Genesis, the Lord would have punished him for these heinous crimes instead of conniving⁵⁰⁹ at the transfer of blessings to a swindler.

The story depriving Esau from the blessings states that He had arrived at the occasion soon after Jacob (pbAh) had succeeded in receiving the blessings of his father. He therefore requested his father to confer his blessings also on him. The reply of Isaac (pbAh) is recorded as under:

And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do

⁵⁰⁶ As recorded in Deu. 10:17b (GNB):

He does not show partiality, and he does not accept bribes.

⁵⁰⁷ As recorded in Ps 82:2 (GNB):

You must stop judging unjustly; you must no longer be partial to the wicked!

⁵⁰⁸ As recorded in Ps 82:4 (GNB):

Rescue them from the power of evil people.

⁵⁰⁹ 'Connive' means: 'wink at; refrain from preventing or forbidding'.

now unto thee, my son?⁵¹⁰

The Good News Bible renders the same verse in the following manner:

Isaac answered, 'I have already made him master over you, and I have made all his relatives his slaves. I have given him grain and wine. Now there is nothing that I can do for you, my son!'⁵¹¹

On further insistence from Esau, Isaac (pbAh) said to him:

(...). No dew from heaven for you, No fertile fields for you. You will live by your sword, But be your brother's slave. Yet when you rebel, You will break away from his control.⁵¹²

The infliction of curse on Esau is an ill-conceived plea to deprive Esau of the blessings. Keeping in view the background of the curse, it was extremely unjust on the part of Isaac (pbAh) to curse Esau who had done no wrong and to bless the son who had committed severe immoralities against his father and brother. No just person can reconcile with the concept that Almighty can allow transfer of blessings to criminals like Jacob (pbAh) as alleged by the Christians and to make such people the ancestor of a long line of the distinguished prophets of the Lord including Moses (pbAh), Aaron (pbAh), Eliah (pbAh), David (pbAh), John (pbAh) Jesus (pbAh), etc.

So far as the curse of Isaac (pbAh) on Esau is concerned, it did not materialize ever in the history of the nations. It was, therefore, a fake curse. Events reported by the Genesis subsequently were exactly opposite to the curse. Genesis itself has narrated Jacob's flight from Canaan due to the fear of Esau. Some 20 years after his exile, he had to re-enter Canaan posing himself as the slave of Esau. Since all these events show clear

⁵¹⁰ Gen. 27:37 KJV.

⁵¹¹ Gen 27:37 GNB.

⁵¹² Gen. 27:39-40 GNB.

cut supremacy of Esau over Jacob (pbAh), therefore, the alleged curse of Isaac (pbAh) must be taken as a mere fabrication of the Israelites inserted into the Genesis sometime after the conquest of Edom by King David (pbAh) which happened perhaps between 990 and 985 BC. It is also to be noted that the above quoted verse 37 had made Jacob (pbAh) the Lord of Esau; and all the relatives of Jacob (pbAh), his slaves perhaps as a reward for his misdeeds against his father and brother. It is, therefore, a blasphemy against the Lord to assert that he can bless those who commit immoralities such as alleged to Jacob (pbAh). Besides other considerations such wicked acts against one's real elder brother are unheard of even in the world of wild brutes. Slavery is not an institution sanctioned by God. Since the vice existed during the times of the prophets, therefore, God has always been issuing instructions for better treatment of the slaves and their freedom on various occasions. God never did initiate the tradition of enslaving one brother by another. Such a change would disrupt the natural order of the creation of human beings, besides bifurcating its members into hostile groups. Slavery is worst type of exploitation which disturbs equality and universal brotherhood of man. It eliminates mutual love and peaceful co-existence of human beings. Man's exploitation of man and infringement of the rights of others is the main cause of destruction and disruption in the world. The Qur'ān says:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the deeds) that the hands of men have earned, that (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil).⁵¹³

⁵¹³ Al-Qur'ān 30:41.

To promote peaceful co-existence on earth, it is necessary that the humankind may agree to the principle of equality of man and worldwide brotherhood submitting themselves to the will of the one and the same Lord God of the universe. The concept of superiority over others had originated from Satan and it persists as the main source of trouble throughout the nations of the world till today. We, therefore, observe that the pretension of supremacy and superior rights as compared to other nations has been the main source of trouble for the Israelites and they cannot have a peaceful life as long as they do not treat others as their brothers. For peaceful co-existence in the world, they have to believe in the universal brotherhood of all descendants of Adam (pbAh). Ignoring this, their assertions of pride are likely to cause more harm to them than to those they decry.⁵¹⁴

The curse of Isaac (pbAh) also seems to be fake because no relative of Jacob (pbAh) ever remained a slave under him while he himself had to serve Laban for 20 years and had to seek forgiveness from Esau by presenting himself as a slave before him as recorded by the Genesis.

Esau was forty years old when he married two Hittite women.⁵¹⁵ As against him, Jacob (pbAh) could get no wife till his flight to Padan Aram at the age of 77 years. Subsequently, he married Leah and Rachel, two daughters of Laban, at the age of 84 and after serving him for about 20 years, he had with him four wives, eleven sons and Dinah his daughter when he reentered Canaan at the age of 97 years.⁵¹⁶ Jacob (pbAh) himself

⁵¹⁴ 'Decry' means: 'to belittle or disparage openly'.

⁵¹⁵ It has been recorded in Gen. 26:34:

And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

⁵¹⁶ W. Smith's DB (p. 274-75) writes:

Jacob, in his 78th year, was sent from the family home to avoid his brother,

was an old man while even his eldest sons, i.e. Reuben, Simeon and Levi, were just teenagers unfit to fight against a strong foe. By that time Esau had already grown into a duke holding vast territories in Edom. Tribal chiefs emerged quite early there, and the Edomites had kings before there reigned any kings over the children of Israel. ⁵¹⁷

It has been stated that while returning with his family from Padan Aram to Canaan, Jacob (pbAh) had sent his messengers

and to seek a wife among his kindred in Padan-aram. (...). After the lapse of twenty-one years he returned from Padan-aram with two wives, two concubines, eleven sons and a daughter, and large property. (...). Joseph, the favourite son of Jacob, was sold into Egypt eleven years before the death of Isaac; and Jacob had probably exceeded his 130th year when he went thither. He was presented to Pharaoh, and dwelt for 17 years in Rameses and Goshen, and died in his 147th year.

⁵¹⁷ It has been recorded in Gen. 36:15-19, 40-43:

These *were* dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn *son* of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, Duke Korah, duke Gatam, *and* duke Amalek: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these *were* the sons of Adah. And these *are* the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Reuel in the land of Edom; these *are* the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife. And these *are* the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these *were* the dukes *that came* of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. These *are* the sons of Esau, who *is* Edom, and these *are* their dukes (Gen. 36:15-19).

And these *are* the names of the dukes *that came* of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth, Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, Duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these *be* the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession: he *is* Esau the father of the Edomites (Gen. 36:40-43).

And 1 Ch. 1:51-54 has also recorded:

Hadad died also. And the dukes of Edom were; duke Timnah, duke Aliah, duke Jetheth, Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, Duke Magdiel, duke Iram. These *are* the dukes of Edom.

ahead of him to appease Esau. They told Jacob (pbAh) that Esau was preparing to meet him with his four hundred men. Learning about the powerful posture of Esau, Jacob (pbAh) was extremely worried and frightened.⁵¹⁸ Esau, however, accepted the repentance and presentation of Jacob (pbAh) gracefully and allowed him freedom in the land. This episode rebuts the alleged prediction of Isaac (pbAh) about Esau that '*you shall serve thy brother*'⁵¹⁹. In spite of false assertions of the Israelites, Jacob (pbAh) never, in fact, became the master over Esau. It was rather Jacob (pbAh) who had the humility to present himself repeatedly as a slave of Esau as recorded in the Bible:

Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the country of Edom. He instructed them to say: "I, Jacob, your obedient servant, report to my master Esau that I have been staying with Laban and that I have delayed my return until now. I own cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and slaves. I am sending you word, sir, in the hope of gaining your favor."⁵²⁰

Jacob (pbAh) also earnestly prayed to the Lord:

Save me, I pray, from my brother Esau. I am afraid—afraid that he is coming to attack us and destroy us all, even the women and children.⁵²¹

Gen 32:13-15 shows that Jacob (pbAh) presented about 580 heads of the livestock to Esau. He instructed his servants that on inquiry from Esau You must answer,

They belong to your servant Jacob. He sends them as a present to his master Esau. Jacob himself is right behind us.⁵²²

⁵¹⁸ Gen 32:7.

⁵¹⁹ Gen 27:40b.

⁵²⁰ Gen. 32:3-5 GNB.

⁵²¹ Gen. 32:11 GNB.

⁵²² Gen. 32:18 GNB.

Jacob (pbAh) further directed his servants that:

You must say, 'Yes, your servant Jacob is right behind us.' Jacob was thinking, 'I will win him over with the gifts, and when I meet him, perhaps he will forgive me.'⁵²³

Ultimately when Jacob (pbAh) saw his brother Esau coming with his 400 men he greeted him as his master. On seeing Esau, Jacob (pbAh) went ahead of his wives, children and the concubines and bowed down to the ground 7 times as he approached his brother. Similarly, his wives and concubines bowed down before Esau (Gen. 33:1-7). To gain the favor of his brother, Jacob (pbAh) also used the flattering words 'To see your face is for me like seeing the face of God.'

It has also been said:

And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, (...) ⁵²⁴

The humble solicitations of Jacob (pbAh) have been recorded in Gen. 32:17-20 showing timidity and meekness of Jacob (pbAh) before Esau. All this shows that Esau and his descendants held a much more prestigious position as compared to Jacob (pbAh). This, therefore, refutes such assertions:

(...) and the elder shall serve the younger.⁵²⁵

And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; ...⁵²⁶

And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother;

⁵²³ Gen. 32:20 GNB.

⁵²⁴ Gen. 32:4 KJV.

⁵²⁵ Gen. 25:23 KJV.

⁵²⁶ Gen. 27:37 KJV.

(...).⁵²⁷

These verses cannot be attributed to Isaac (pbAh). They were perhaps fabricated some time after the fall of Judah to disaffirm the slavish role of Jacob (pbAh) at the time of his meeting Esau on his return. It can, however, be observed that such interpolations have added self-contradictory statements in the Genesis than to provide any additional honor or relief to Jacob (pbAh) as well as the Israelites. Such insertions with retrospective effect failed to provide royal robes to Jacob (pbAh) who had to live shrouded by cowardice, immorality and grief. From his youth upwards, he had been full of sorrows and he bore them with a troubled mind as reflected in the following verses:

(...) and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.⁵²⁸

And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.⁵²⁹

And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.⁵³⁰

So far as the actual life of Jacob (pbAh) is concerned, he had to suffer blow after blow and stroke after stroke, trouble coming

⁵²⁷ Gen. 27:40 KJV.

⁵²⁸ Gen 34:30 KJV.

⁵²⁹ Gen 37:34 KJV.

⁵³⁰ Gen 47:9 KJV.

like hails. Hence, false pens of the scribes cannot change the facts.

Ch-12. Characters in the Episodes

a) Isaac (pbAh)

The baseless story that Isaac (pbAh) favored Esau more than Jacob (pbAh) has caused a permanent hatred for Isaac (pbAh) among the Israelites as well as the Christians. Expositors have devoted thousands of pages with repeated and bitter criticism of Isaac (pbAh) and Esau. Some of the events and the reasons proffered to denigrate them are extremely ridiculous. Here is an example of the adeptness of the Jews to promote their own cause:

(...) – and his eyes dimmed from seeing. Isaac was 123 years old then. Accordingly, the year was 2171 from creation (see also chronology in 25:17). Rashi offers three reasons for Isaac's failing eyesight: (a) from the smoke of the incense that Esau's wives offered to their idols. [the greater a person is, the more sensitive he is to evil. Isaac, more than anyone else, was affected by the idolatrous incense smoke that contaminated his surroundings.] Further, God caused him this blindness to spare him from continuing to see idol worship in his household (Tanchuma). (b) When Isaac lay bound on the altar at the Akeidah the ministering angels wept over him. Their tears fell into his eyes and dimmed them. [This means that Isaac saw a heavenly vision of the suffering angels, a sight beyond ordinary human powers, and the "glow" of the vision weakened his eyes (Yefeh Toar)] (Bereishis Rabbah). (c) Providence caused his blindness so that Jacob might receive the blessing [without Isaac realizing whom he was blessing] (Tanchuma). In the plain sense, his blindness was nothing more than a natural manifestation of old age, just Jacob's

eyesight failed him in his later years [48:10] (Ramban) Alternatively, it was in punishment for Isaac's failure to restrain Esau's wickedness (Sforno).⁵³¹

Although Genesis has depicted Isaac (pbAh) as an average or below average man, yet the commentators of the Bible have gone too far to spoil the brilliant figure of the great prophet of the Lord simply because of the allegation that he was bent upon blessing Esau to deprive the Israelites from the blessings. They, therefore, condemn him for the sin of attempting to deprive the Israelites from the inheritance and the blessings. Here are certain more comments to debase Isaac (pbAh):

(...). It is hard to fathom how the righteous Isaac could be so adamant in choosing Esau and why Rebecca would resort to such a blatant deception to secure the blessings for Jacob. The commentators offer many interpretations. our commentary will draw upon several of those themes.

1-4 Isaac's decision to bless Esau. As the first born, Esau had the presumptive right to the blessings, and Isaac would not have had the right to deny them to him unless there was compelling cause. Clearly, despite Esau's marriage to Hittite women, Isaac was unaware of the degree of Esau's sinfulness and Rebecca had not been authorized to tell him about the prophecy given her at the beginning of the Sidrah. Also Isaac felt that it was Esau who needed blessings to arm him in his struggle against an inborn nature that tended toward bloodshed and other cardinal sins, whereas Jacob had the inner strength to grow and be holy without the assistance of the blessings.⁵³²

This reflects disapproval of the expositor for Isaac's adamancy to choose Esau for the blessings in spite of certain factors disqualifying him from the blessings. The said factors are examined below:

⁵³¹ Rabbi Nosson Scherman, *The Chumash*, Stone Edn, p. 135.

⁵³² Rabbi Nosson Scherman, *The Chumash*, Stone Edn, p. 134.

1. One of the shortcomings alleged to Esau was his marriage with Hittite women which is merely a lame excuse to disqualify him from the blessings. Earlier to him, Abraham (pbAh) the grand father of Esau and Jacob (pbAh) had married Hagar the Egyptian. He also married Keturah whose origin is unknown. It is, however, certain that she did not belong to the family line of Abraham (pbAh). Similarly, Jacob's marriage with Bilha⁵³³ slave of Rachel⁵³⁴ and Zilpha⁵³⁵ slave of Leah⁵³⁶ did not disqualify him from the blessings in spite of the fact that those women were slaves while nothing is known about their origin. Those marriages brought no blemish either on Abraham (pbAh) or on Jacob (pbAh). The descendants of Jacob (pbAh) from the slave women have always been accepted as the true Israelites. They have always been treated at par with descendants of Jacob (pbAh) from Leah and Rachel in respect of blessings and inheritance of land. Esau's marriage with Hittite women, therefore, could not have disqualified him from his inheritance material or spiritual.

2. There is also something fishy in the presumption that God had bestowed power of blessing to Isaac (pbAh) without revealing to him the name of the beneficiary. The revelation to Rebecca bypassing Isaac (pbAh) suggests distrust of the Lord in his prophet. Worse than that is the plea that Rebecca was forbidden to disclose the revelation even to Isaac (pbAh).⁵³⁷ If so, there is no justification to blame or criticize Isaac (pbAh) for his adamancy to bless Esau as alleged by the expositor. On the other hand, if Rebecca believed in the prophecy, she should not have doubted the competence or ability of the Lord to impose His will on earth. As such, either Rebecca had no revelation at all or she suffered

⁵³³ 'Bilhah' was the handmaid of Rachel, and concubine of Jacob, to whom she bore Dan and Naphtali (Smith's A DB, p.93).

⁵³⁴ Gen 30:3-7.

⁵³⁵ 'Zilpah' was a Syrian given by Laban to his daughter Leah as an attendant, and by Leah to Jacob as a concubine. She was the mother of Gad and Asher (Smith's A DB, p.767).

⁵³⁶ Gen 30:9-13.

⁵³⁷ Gen 25:21-23.

from an utter lack of faith in the Lord due to which she felt compelled to indulge into the immorality of deceiving her blind and bed-ridden husband who was a great prophet of the Lord. The immoral acts of Rebecca, therefore, show her infidelity not only towards her husband but also towards the Lord.

3. The commentator has also given another strange reason for Isaac's preference for Esau. According to him:

Isaac felt it was Esau who needed blessings to arm him in his struggle against an inborn nature that tended toward bloodshed and other cardinal sins, whereas Jacob had the inner strength to grow and be holy without the assistance of the blessings.⁵³⁸

If so, where was the need for Rebecca and Jacob to resort to falsehood, fraud and impersonation to steal the blessings when already '*Jacob had the inner strength to grow and be holy without the assistance of the blessings*'.

Marcus Dods condemns Isaac (pbAh) by adopting a roundabout method in the following words:

But before we condemn Isaac, or think the historian has not given a full account of his love for Esau, let us ask what we have noticed about the growth and decay of our own affections. We are ashamed of Isaac; but have we not also been sometimes ashamed of ourselves on seeing that our affections are powerfully influenced by the gratification of tastes almost or quite as low as this of Isaac's?⁵³⁹

Referring to the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, the same writer expresses his hatred against Isaac (pbAh):

It was commendable in him that, in great bodily weakness, he still believed himself to be the guardian of God's blessing, and recognized that he had a great inheritance to bequeath to his sons. But, in unaccountable and inconsistent contempt of God's expressed purpose, he proposes to hand over this blessing to

⁵³⁸ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Stone Edn. p 134.

⁵³⁹ Marcus Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 259.

Esau. Many things had occurred to fix his attention upon the fact that Esau was not to be his heir. Esau had sold his birthright and had married Hittite women, and his whole conduct was, no doubt, of a piece [sic] with this, and showed that, in his hands, any spiritual inheritance would be both unsafe and unappreciated. That Isaac had some notion he was doing wrong in giving to Esau what belonged to God, and what God meant to give to Jacob, is shown from his precipitation in bestowing the blessing. He has no feeling that he is authorized by God, and therefore he cannot wait calmly till God should intimate, by unmistakable signs, that he is near his end; but, seized with a panic lest his favorite should somehow be left unblessed, he feels, in his nervous alarm, as if he were at the point of death, and, though destined to live for forty-three years longer, he calls Esau that he may hand over to him his dying testament. How different is the nerve of a man when he knows he is doing God's will, and when he is but fulfilling his own device. For the same reason, he has to stimulate his spirit by artificial means. The prophetic ecstasy is not felt by him; he must be exhilarated by venison⁵⁴⁰ and wine, that, strengthened and revived in body, and having his gratitude aroused afresh towards Esau, he may bless him with all the greater vigour.⁵⁴¹

In the above passages, Dr. Dods has criticized Isaac (pbAh) having committed contempt of God's express purpose by blessing Esau. Anyhow, he has failed to adduce any evidence that Isaac (pbAh) was intentionally violating specific directions or revelation from the Lord. There is nothing on record to indicate that Esau could not be his heir. Dr. Dods has, perhaps, relied on Gen 25:22-26, i.e., the oracle revealing to Rebecca that the older will serve the younger. Even if true, Rebecca did not tell Isaac (pbAh) about the oracle. In the absence of any disclosure to Isaac (pbAh), how could he blame Isaac (pbAh) of doing something against the will of God?

⁵⁴⁰ 'Venison' means: 'A deer flesh as food'.

⁵⁴¹ Marcus Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 268-269.

It can also not be ignored that the first born and the rights attached to the same is the ordination of the Lord. Any attempt to deprive Esau from the same was an open rebellion against the Lord. It can, therefore, not be assumed that Isaac (pbAh) the great prophet or Rebecca, the matriarch could have dared to interfere into the work of God. Only the masses among the Israelites had the tradition to disobey the Lord or to defy his commandments. Anything ordained by the Lord must be non-transferable and cannot be treated as a negotiable instrument. As such, neither Esau had any power to sell nor Jacob (pbAh) to purchase the same. The callous exploitation of one's brother dying of hunger must be ascribed as a fratricide rather than a fair deal between them. Revelations from the Lord serve as guidance to man to tread on the right path. How can we presume that God stood behind a wicked person who had committed crimes against his father and his brother? Hence, instead of diversion of blessings to him the God would have cursed him for the falsehood, fraud and impersonation before his father.

In view of the above, it is clear that the despicable words of Dr. Dods were based entirely on his own bias against Isaac (pbAh) who according to Dods was attempting something against the interests of the Israelites. Aside from this, his ill-founded allegations against Jacob (pbAh) or Rebecca find no support from the scripture, the customs or moral standards prevailing in the society. Dr. Dods' eagerness to promote the cause of Israel is also evident from his further contemptuous remarks against Isaac (pbAh) as reproduced below:

It is a strange and, in some respects, perplexing spectacle that is here presented to us – the organ of the Divine blessing represented by a blind old man⁵⁴², laid on a 'couch of skins.' Stimulated by meat

⁵⁴² After the mythological trees of life and knowledge, standing in the garden

and wine, and trying to cheat God by bestowing the family blessing on the son of his own choice to the exclusion of the divinely-appointed heir. Out of such beginnings had God to educate a people worthy of Himself, and through such hazards had He to guide the spiritual blessing He designed to convey to us all.⁵⁴³

The prejudice of the Jewish commentators against Isaac (pbAh) and Esau is also evident from the following:

Isaac perceived the Gehinnom open beneath Esau (Rashi), which was in sharp contrast to the fragrance of Eden that had accompanied Jacob into Isaac's chamber. The presence of Gehinnom with Esau made Isaac realize that he had been deceived all along – Esau was truly evil. This made Isaac fear that the vision of Gehinnom proved that he, Isaac, would be punished for having allowed himself to be so grievously misled (Pesikta d'Rav Kahana).⁵⁴⁴

It is futile to look for the sources of such comments except the prejudice of the expositors.

b) Rebecca

According to the Genesis, Rebecca loved Jacob more than Esau. All her acts, therefore, have been sanctified by the Jews as well as the Christians. Most of the commentators hold that Rebecca was guided by Divine inspiration due to which she knew that

of Eden (Gen 2:9), we come across the tree of blessing in the form of Isaac (pbAh), the old bed-ridden maniac of the Bible with Cupids bow stretched with the single arrow of blessing. Like a tree, Isaac (pbAh) was unable to ward off the transgressors approaching the fruit forbidden to them. God as usual had no control over life, death, or blessings. He did not intervene to frustrate treachery of Rebecca who succeeded to deflect the blessings from Esau to Jacob (pbAh). Blessings on Jacob (pbAh) and his progeny were not therefore a gift from God. Bible ascribes all blessings to deception and robbery on the part of Rebecca and Jacob (pbAh).

⁵⁴³ Marcus Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 268-269.

⁵⁴⁴ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 27:33, p. 139.

Esau was not entitled either to the birthright or to the blessings. Ultimately, after devoting so many pages to condemn Esau and to defend Jacob (pbAh), Dr. Dods also gives certain remarks about the futility of the efforts of Rebecca and Jacob (pbAh) to achieve their ends:

And Jacob lost all the comforts of home, and all those possessions his father had accumulated. He had to flee with nothing but his staff, an outcast to begin the world for himself. From this first false step onwards to his death, he was pursued by misfortune, until his own verdict on his life was, "few and evil have been the days of the years of my life." Thus severely was the sin of Rebekah and Jacob punished. It coloured their whole after-life with a deep sombre hue. It was marked thus, because it was a sin by all means to be avoided. It was virtually the sin of blaming God for forgetting His promise, or of accusing Him of being unable to perform it; so that they Rebekah and Jacob, had, forsooth, to take God's work out of his hands, and show Him how it ought to be done.⁵⁴⁵

It is astonishing to note that instead of blaming Jacob (pbAh) or Rebecca to cheat Isaac (pbAh), Dr. Dods has attempted to prove Isaac (pbAh) as a cheater and a debased person. He continues to say that:

Isaac laid a net for his own feet. By his unrighteousness and timorous haste he secured the defeat of his own long-cherished scheme. It was his hasting to bless Esau which drove Rebekah to checkmate him by winning the blessing for her favourite.⁵⁴⁶

Had Dr. Dods any regard for God or His prophet, he could not have dared to ascribe sin, unrighteousness and timidity to a great prophet of the Lord. He was so zealous to support the cause of Rebecca and Jacob (pbAh) that he describes Rebecca excelling the Lord in skill and the promptness of action:

⁵⁴⁵ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 274.

⁵⁴⁶ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 269.

Isaac's sin propagated itself with the rapid multiplication of all sin. Rebekah overheard what passed between Isaac and Esau, and although she might have been able to wait until by fair means Jacob received the blessing, yet when she sees Isaac actually preparing to pass Jacob by and bless Esau, her fears are so excited that she cannot any longer quietly leave the matter in God's hand, but must lend her own more skilful management. It may have crossed her mind that she was justified in forwarding what she knew to be God's purpose. She saw no other way of saving God's purpose and Jacob's rights than by her interference.⁵⁴⁷

While Dr. Dods has attributed sin to Isaac (pbAh), he has praised Rebecca who counterbalanced the evil deed of Isaac (pbAh). He appreciates Rebecca who could not '*any longer quietly leave the matter in God's hands but must lend her more skilful management*'. Rebecca therefore, surpassed the Lord in her skilful management and to fulfill God's purpose which God might have failed to accomplish without intervention by her. His commendation for the immoral acts of Rebecca and Jacob (pbAh) is also evident from the following:

This over reaching of Isaac by dressing Jacob in Esau's clothes, might come in naturally as one of those daily deceptions which Rebekah was accustomed to practise on the old man whom she kept quite in her own hand giving him as much or as little insight into the doings of the family as seemed advisable to her. It would never occur to her that she was taking God in hand; it would seem only as if she were making such use of Isaac's infirmity as she was in the daily practice of doing.⁵⁴⁸

Look at the well-worded and expert apology of Dr. Dods which, following the ideology of St. Paul, has been utilized to gloss over

⁵⁴⁷ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 271.

⁵⁴⁸ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 272.

the inequities of both Rebecca and Jacob (pbAh). Influence of St. Paul is also evident from the following:

But to account for an act is not to excuse it. Underlying the conduct of Rebekah and Jacob was the conviction that they would come better speed by a little deceit of their own than by suffering God to further them in His own way that though God would certainly not practise deception Himself, He might not object to others doing so – that in this emergency holiness was a hampering thing which might just for a little be laid aside that they might be more holy afterwards – that though no doubt in ordinary circumstances, and as a normal habit, deceit is not to be commended, *yet in cases of difficulty, which call for ready wit, a prompt seizure, and delicate handling, men must be allowed to secure their ends in their own way.* [stress added] Their unbelief thus directly produced immorality – immorality of a very revolting kind, the defrauding of their relatives, and repulsive also because practiced as if on God's side, or, as we should now say, 'in the interests of religion.' To this day the method of Rebekah and Jacob is largely adopted by religious persons. It is notorious that persons whose ends are good frequently become thoroughly unscrupulous about the means they use to accomplish them. They dare not say in so many words that they may do evil that good may come, nor do they think it a tenable⁵⁴⁹ position in morals that the end sanctifies the means; and yet their consciousness of a justifiable and desirable end undoubtedly does blunt their sensitiveness regarding the legitimacy of the means they employ.⁵⁵⁰

The immoral acts like deception, falsehood and fraud can hardly find any better apology than presented by the expositor in the above lines. He seems to justify all that is '*in the interest of religion*'; and which, according to him, is being largely adopted by religious persons till today. Presuming the observation as

⁵⁴⁹ 'Tenable' means: 'capable of being defended or sustained; logical; tenacious=holding firmly'.

⁵⁵⁰ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 272-273.

correct, the religious person may feel free to adopt all types of falsehood and fraud to promote the religion and to '*do evil that good may come*'. Since the truth and the legitimacy of means might prove hindrance in the promotion of certain teachings of faith, therefore, to establish their own convictions, the religious people may set aside truth, logic and the facts.

After showing sympathy to Rebecca and Jacob (pbAh), Dr. Dods takes another turn as follows:

They do not feel the dishonesty of their position, because they have a general consciousness that they are on the side of religion, and of what has generally passed for truth. All keeping back of facts which are supposed to have an unsettling effect is but a repetition of this sin. There is no sin more hateful. Under the appearance of serving God, and maintaining His cause in the world, it insults Him by assuming that if the whole bare, undisguised truth were spoken, His cause would suffer.⁵⁵¹

In addition to the above, we produce from a Jewish source an interesting apology for Rebecca's sin to deceive Isaac (pbAh) to thwart⁵⁵² his desire to bless Esau:

Rebecca's Scheme. Having been told before the twins were born that the younger would be the superior one, Rebecca knew that the blessings had to go to Jacob. She also knew from that prophecy that the two could not coexist because when one would rise the other would fall – so that any plan Isaac might have to enlist them in joint service of God could not succeed – but she had not been commanded to convey this knowledge to Isaac. Her only alternative was to deceive Isaac into giving the blessings to Jacob. For Jacob, this was the ultimate test, his personal Akeldah a test of awesome proportions – because, as the sages derive from Scripture, Jacob personified truth and he was to receive the blessings that would be ratified by God whose very seal is 'truth.'

⁵⁵¹ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 274.

⁵⁵² 'Thwart' means: 'to frustrate; to oppose; to challenge'.

But his mother was commanding him to secure those blessings by perpetrating a falsehood against his father, for Jacob to behave in such a way was totally foreign to his nature. Thus, both brothers were to engage in difficult tasks to earn the blessings: Esau was at the hunt risking his life, and Jacob was at home risking his soul, his spiritual essence.⁵⁵³

According to the expositor, it was not Isaac (pbAh) but Rebecca who knew that the blessings had to go to the younger brother Jacob (pbAh). Instead of conveying the purpose of God to Isaac (pbAh), she chose to defeat her husband. The verdict of sages that '*Jacob personified truth*' is also a ridiculous assertion in the text. According to them, Jacob (pbAh) had to perpetrate⁵⁵⁴ falsehood and fraud to be ratified by God as the seal of truth.

Aside from other apologies, Dr. Dods shows Jacob (pbAh) trusting his own falsehood than taking the risk of God's forgetfulness to give him his due. Meanwhile, he also contrasts the faith of Jacob (pbAh) with Abraham (pbAh):

His grandson is so little sure of God's truth, that he will rather trust his own falsehood; and what he thinks God may forget to give him, he will steal from his own father.⁵⁵⁵

c) Esau and Jacob (pbAh)

After quoting many passages from Dr Dods, we may revert to some writings of the Jewish scholars.

The exposition to Gen 25:29 in the *Chumash* says:

The sages teach that Abraham died that day and Jacob was preparing the stew as the traditional mourner's meal for his father. (Bava Basra 16b).

⁵⁵³ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 27:5-17, p 135.

⁵⁵⁴ 'Perpetrate' means: 'commit; be guilty of'.

⁵⁵⁵ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 275.

It is useless to question about the sources of the sages quoted by Bava Basra. Anyhow, no presumption of truth can be attached to the above teachings for the reasons given below.

Genesis had it that Abraham (pbAh) was 100 years old when Isaac (pbAh) was born. Isaac (pbAh) was 60 years when he begot Esau and Jacob (pbAh). By that time Abraham (pbAh) must have been 160 years old. He died at the age of 175 years which means that both Esau and Jacob (pbAh) were just teenagers of about 15 years each. As such no legal sale or purchase could be made between the children. As against this, most of the expositors assess the age of Esau and Jacob (pbAh) about 31-32 years at the time of the alleged sale of birthrights by Esau. Even according to *A Chronicle of Biblical History*, Abraham (pbAh) died in the year 1792 B.C. while Esau sold his birth right to Jacob (pbAh) in 1775 B.C. which means Abraham (pbAh) had died 17 years before the so called sale of his birth right. We, therefore, find no credibility in the conjecture of Bava Basra or the sages referred by him.⁵⁵⁶ Due to the same reasons, we cannot also rely on the following:

The great of all nations stood in the mourner's tow and lamented, 'Woe to the world that has lost its leader; woe to the ship that has lost its pilot!' (Bava Basra 91b), but Esau went about his evil business as usual, uninvolved in his family's bereavement.⁵⁵⁷

Although the expositor has done his best to malign Esau for his alleged misconduct but he fails to offer any explanation for the callous and malicious act of Jacob (pbAh) who did not spare his real elder brother even at the mourning ceremony of Abraham (pbAh). Jacob (pbAh) exploited Esau by exchanging his birthright against the stew prepared as traditional mourner's meal. Look

⁵⁵⁶ Dr. R. C Wetzel, *A Chronicle of Biblical Christianity*, (The Ages Digital Library History, USA 1997).

⁵⁵⁷ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, com. on v. 29, p. 127.

at the exchange value paid by Jacob (pbAh) to purchase the entire birthright of the firstborn of Isaac (pbAh) the very rich man as reported by the Genesis. The exchange took place against the stew owned two third by the first born Esau and one third by Jacob (pbAh). It was perhaps for this reason that one of the great scholars of the Israelites (and the Christians as well) eulogized the trickery of Jacob (pbAh) while they continue to malign Esau without any proof of his wickedness on record. It was Jacob (pbAh) who had long been planning to rob his elder brother of his divinely granted rights:

But Jacob had long been watching for an opportunity to win his brother's birthright, and though no one could have supposed that an heir to even a little property would sell it in order to get a meal five minutes sooner than he could otherwise get it, Jacob had taken his brother's measure to a nicety, and was confident that present appetite would in Esau completely extinguish every other thought.⁵⁵⁸

From the rabbinical literature of the Israelites, another example of the biased writings is given below:

Even while in his mother's womb Esau manifested his evil disposition, maltreating and injuring his twin brother (Gen. R. lxiii.) During the early years of their boyhood he and Jacob looked so much alike that they could not be distinguished. It was not till they were thirteen years of age that their radically different temperaments began to appear (Tan., Toledot, 2). Jacob was a student in the best ha-midrash of Eber (Targ. Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen. xxv. 27), while Esau was a ne'er-do-well (ib.; 'a true progeny of the serpent.' Zohar), who insulted women and committed murder, and whose shameful conduct brought on the death of his grandfather, Abraham (Pesik. R. 12). On the very day that Abraham died Esau went forth to hunt in the field, when he fell in with Nimrod, who for a long time previously had been jealous of him. Esau, lying in wait, pounced on the king, who was unaware

⁵⁵⁸ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 262.

of his proximity, and, drawing his sword, cut off the king's head. The same fate befell two attendants of Nimrod, who had, however, by their cries for help, brought the royal suit to the spot. Esau took to his heels, but carried off the garments of Nimrod – which were those of Adam (Targ. Pseudo-Jon. To Gen. xxvii. 15) – and concealed them in his father's house. It was when exhausted from running that he chanced upon Jacob, who cunningly took up a casual remark of his about the uselessness of the birthright, and trapped him into selling the latter as well as his share in the field of Machpelah, making and keeping a properly witnessed and sealed record of the transaction ('Sefer hs-Yashar', vi.).⁵⁵⁹

May be the Israelite scholars had themselves witnessed the mal-treatment of Esau with Jacob (pbAh) due to which they confidently portray one of the twins as the progeny of serpent while the other one the only legitimate and the blessed son of Isaac (pbAh), the prophet. Aside from this, we have to be credulous to believe that Esau a teenager of 15 years had for a long time previously earned jealousy of nimrod, the king of Babylonia and the most famous hunter of his time. *Lying in wait for the king, Esau pounced upon him and killed him along with his two attendants probably somewhere near Hebron.* Why and how the king of Babylonia could be there has not been disclosed whereas Babylonia and Hebron lay on the opposite ends of the 'Fertile Crescent' having a distance of more than one thousand miles between them. Anyhow, caring little for the armed men with the king, Esau the teenager had enough time and courage to carry off the royal garments of Nimrod – which were of Adam (pbAh). We also have to believe that the army of the mighty king failed to chase Esau or to take any action against him thereafter. Queer enough that the same ferocious hunter and murderer had to surrender his birth

⁵⁵⁹ *The Jewish Enc*, 5:205.

right to Jacob (pbAh) just for a cup of the stew prepared from the substance shared two third by Esau and only one third by Jacob (pbAh). All such events we have to believe either as divine revelations or its exposition without any right to question; how and why?

The struggle between the embryos has also been described as under:

(...) when Rebecca passed the Torah academy of Shem and Eber⁵⁶⁰, Jacob 'ran' and struggled to come forth: and when she passed a temple of idol worship, Esau 'ran' and struggled to come forth (Midrash). Gur Aryeh explains that this embryonic Jacob. Esau struggle was not influenced by their personal Good and Evil Inclinations, for they are not present before birth. Rather, Jacob and Esau represented cosmic forces in creation, forces that transcended the normal course of personality development, and that existed even before birth.⁵⁶¹

The comments noted above are really awe inspiring. During those days no woman could know for definite that she had twins in her womb. Only Rebecca knew that she had twins in her womb and she also recognized each embryo by name. She could also differentiate between the actions of each embryonic twin. Similarly, we also have to believe that the embryonic

⁵⁶⁰ We do not know at what place Rebecca had the chance to pass the Torah Academy of Shem and Eber! It is however strange to note that the Israelites had failed to remember the name of God worshipped by Abraham (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh), and Jacob (pbAh) due to which they requested Moses (pbAh) to tell them the name of God. On the other hand utmost care had been taken to record the geneologies of the Israelites from Adam (pbAh) to Jesus (pbAh). Minute details about the events of the birth of Esau and Jacob (pbAh) (Gen 25:21-26) have been provided simply to determine the inheritance of the Israelites. A repeat of similar shameful description we find regarding the birth of Perez and Zera born out of the incestuous coupling between Judah and Tamar (Gen 38:27-30).

⁵⁶¹ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, v 25:22, p 125.

twins could see the outside world to show their reaction about the places their mother used to visit.

It is also said that during early years Jacob (pbAh) and Esau had similar traits but from the teenage, the differences between them were quite conspicuous. Rashi seems to know a lot about them:

From the age of thirteen, the essential differences became apparent, with Esau turning to idols and Jacob going to the study hall. Esau became a hunter, but not only in the literal sense. He became adept at trapping his father by asking questions that would make him appear to be usually pious. He would ask, for example, how tithes should be taken from salt and straw [although he knew full well that they were not subject to tithes]. And he gained his father's love by serving him conscientiously; for example by hunting game to put in his mouth, so that Isaac could eat fresh and tasty meat. Jacob, however, was morally wholesome, saying what he thought and never being duplicitous, and spending all his time in the study tents of Shem and Eber (Rashi).⁵⁶²

Isaac (pbAh) had miserably failed to notice the trapping of Esau while Jewish expositors knew Esau better than Isaac (pbAh). As such, being unaware of the vices of Esau, Isaac (pbAh) continued to love him passionately till the time of the blessings and the curse.

Chumash also notes:

David and Esau had similar personalities, but David utilized it for good and became one of the greatest people who ever lived. Esau let his nature run rampant⁵⁶³, and became the eternal symbol of evil and cruelty.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶² Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 25:27-28, p 127.

⁵⁶³ 'Rampant' means: 'unrestrained; extending unchecked'.

⁵⁶⁴ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 25:25, p 126.

An apology for Jacob's cheating Esau may also be of some interest to the reader:

The Midrash teaches that since the sacrificial service was performed by the firstborn in those days, Jacob said, 'shall this wicked man stand and bring the offerings!' therefore he strove mightily to obtain the birthright.⁵⁶⁵

The remarks given below elevate Jacob (pbAh) while expressing bitter hatred against Esau. The Expositors go up to the extent of comparing Esau with the Roman Empire and make Romans as the descendants of Esau:

Alternatively, Jacob's power is in the voice that prays; as the Sages teach (Gittin 57b), *whenever a prayer is effective, a descendant of Jacob must have been among those who prayed* [stress added]. Esau's power is in his murderous hands—the hands of the Roman Empire, Esau's descendants, which destroyed the Second Temple and exiled us from our land. Whenever an army is victorious, Esau's descendants must have had a hand in it.⁵⁶⁶

Chumash goes to the extent that it compares Esau to a swine. It blames him of adultery and that he married Hittite women that rendered him completely unfit to carry on the mission of Abraham (pbAh):

Esau is compared to a swine that, when it lies down, stretches out its cloven hoof, as if to say, 'See, I am a kosher animal!' Similarly, the princes of Esau rob and extort⁵⁶⁷ while they pretend to be honorable (...). So it was with Esau. Until he was forty, he had been living immorally, enticing married women from their husbands, but when he became forty, he said hypocritically that he would follow the example of his father who married at the age. Unlike his father, however, Esau married Hittite women; his passions were unbridled and he chose to marry into a nation that

⁵⁶⁵ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 25:27-28, p. 127.

⁵⁶⁶ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 27:22, p 137.

⁵⁶⁷ 'Extort' means: 'to get by force or threats; wring out'.

matched his evil nature. With these marriages, Esau set the seal on his complete unfitness to carry on the mission of Abraham. In a home ruled by two Hittite women, the Abrahamic ideal lies buried (R' Hirsch).⁵⁶⁸

The commentary observes on Gen 27:30 that God facilitated Jacob (pbAh) in usurping the blessings from his father against his will:

The Midrash notes that God arranged for Esau to be less successful than usual in his hunt, so that Jacob, 'who was the glory of the world,' would have the time to receive the blessings that were rightfully his.⁵⁶⁹

It blames that Esau was barbarous and greedy:

Because Esau had a tendency to bloodshed and the indulgence of his voracious⁵⁷⁰ physical appetites, Isaac wanted him to turn those traits to the service of God, by hunting to bring food to his father whose table was like an altar, and by preparing the food through kosher slaughter (Ne'os Hadesheh).⁵⁷¹

It also observes that Esau and Jacob (pbAh) differed as regards the purpose of their marriages. Esau married only to satisfy his sexual lust while Jacob (pbAh) married to bring the Jewish people into being:

In the case of Esau, the order is reversed: he looks his wives and his sons (36:6), because Esau married only to satisfy his personal lusts; his children were always secondary. To Jacob, however, his primary responsibility was to bring the Jewish people into being (Gur Aryeh).⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁸ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 26:34-35, p. 133f.

⁵⁶⁹ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 27:30, p 139.

⁵⁷⁰ 'Voracious' means: 'greedy; ravenous'.

⁵⁷¹ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, Gen 27:3-4, p 135.

⁵⁷² Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, v. 19, p. 163.

Factually, the Jewish expositors have made every effort to disgrace Esau and to exalt Jacob (pbAh) on his cost. In their eagerness to contrast Esau sharply with Jacob (pbAh), they invented extremely ridiculous events to denounce Esau and to upraise Jacob (pbAh). Pachad Yitzchak goes even to the extent of denying the position of Esau as the first born of Isaac (pbAh):

He explains that the contention between Jacob and Esau was over who would assume the spiritual mission of Abraham and Isaac. Thus the critical factor in their birth was the seed of the Patriarch that had been implanted in the mother's egg, for it contained the essence of the father. Consequently, *since Jacob was conceived first*,⁵⁷³ *he was the spiritual firstborn and therefore entitled to the blessings*. [stress added] In the strictly legal sense, however – relating shares in an inheritance and other legal privileges of the firstborn – the determining factor is birth, not conception. Thus, the later efforts of Jacob and Rebecca to secure the birthright for Jacob must be understood in the light of Jacob's spiritual superiority.⁵⁷⁴

Some more comments are being recorded hereunder:

But Esau's despising of his birthright is that which stamps the man and makes him interesting to each generation. No one can read the simple account of his reckless act without feeling how justly we are called upon to 'look diligently lest there be among us any profane person as Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright.' Had the birthright been something to eat, Esau would not have sold it. What an exhibition of human nature! What an exposure of our childish folly and the infatuation of appetite! For Esau has company in his fall. We are all stricken by his shame. We are conscious that if God had made provision for the flesh we

⁵⁷³ What a ridiculous assertion! How can one ascertain that who was conceived first out of the two twin brothers? No diagnostic techniques, scanning, Xray, and ultra-sound were developed by that time. Which was the person who could claim to know which 'seed' was planted first in the egg?

⁵⁷⁴ Rabbi N. Scherman, *The Chumash*, p. 127.

should have listened to Him more readily. 'But what will this birthright profit us?'⁵⁷⁵

Dr. Dods continues to express his anguish against Esau by showing him a selfish person. According to him, Esau had no rights; divine or human for the inheritance. This pretence, however, is not sustainable because if Esau had no genuine rights, where was the need for exploitation, fraud and falsehood committed by Jacob (pbAh) as well as Rebecca.⁵⁷⁶ Dr. Dods pleads as under:

Of all the parties in this transaction none is more to blame than Esau. He shows now how selfish and untruthful the sensual man really is, and how worthless is the generosity which is merely of impulse and not bottomed on principle.⁵⁷⁷ While he so furiously

⁵⁷⁵ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 264-265.

⁵⁷⁶ Gen 25:27-34 and ch. 27.

⁵⁷⁷ These words are exactly true if the word 'Esau' be changed with 'Jacob'. The act of selling and purchasing is a mutual contract. Morally it should not be based on 'exploitation'. Both parties should benefit from the bargain on equal basis. There should be no deceit or loss to either party. Whosoever originally fabricated the story of the selling of the birthright seems to be a biased and base person. Then the biblical scholars, making a mountain of a mole hill, gave it their self designed colours. What can be collected from their comments is stated below:

- 1) Jacob (pbAh) seems to be a selfish, ambitious, ruthless, exploiting, cheater.
- 2) He has no love or sympathy for his own elder brother.
- 3) Instead of compassionately running to provide food to his hungry brother, he plays as Shylock; and cruelly tries to rob his brother of his so called birth right. It was a time of succour and sympathy and not a time of exploiting and robbing bargains.
- 4) Esau being awfully hungry could not imagine about his own real brother to be so barbarous and did not think that he could have really meant to such a mean plot. Being brought in the house of great prophets like Abraham (pbAh) and Isaac (pbAh) under their guidance, he was a simple hearted noble man and, at the time, his sole aim of life was to serve and comfort his aged and ailing father. It is interesting to note what an obnoxious colour worthy commentator has given to the events!

and bitterly blamed Jacob for supplanting⁵⁷⁸ him, it might surely have occurred to him that it was really he who was supplanting Jacob. He had no right, divine or human, to the inheritance.⁵⁷⁹ God had never said that his possession should go to oldest,⁵⁸⁰ and had in this case said the express opposite.⁵⁸¹ Besides, inconstant as Esau was, he could scarcely have forgotten the bargain that so pleased him at the time, and by which he had sold to his younger brother all title to his father's blessings.⁵⁸² Jacob was to blame for seeking to win his own⁵⁸³ by craft but Esau was more to blame for endeavoring furtively⁵⁸⁴ to recover what he knew to be no longer his. His bitter cry was the cry of a disappointed and enraged child, what Hosea calls the 'howl' of those who seem to seek the Lord, but are really merely crying out, like animals,⁵⁸⁵ for corn and

⁵⁷⁸ 'Supplant' means: 'to take the place of, esp. unfairly; oust'.

⁵⁷⁹ By which canon of law and justice 'He had no right, divine or human, to the inheritance.'?

⁵⁸⁰ '*God had never said that his possession should go to oldest.*' What does it mean? Leaving aside the so-called biblical instructions regarding the birth-right of the first-born, which clearly implies that it was Esau who should have been the genuine beneficiary in this case, 'God had also never said that his possession should go to the younger brother, i.e. Jacob'. God had neither told it to Isaac, nor to Esau or Jacob: the concerned parties in this case. Rebecca is a nobody and irrelevant person in this case. Why should God have told only her anything in this regard leaving aside the real and concerned parties (and keeping them in darkness)? She was neither the beneficiary in this matter nor an administrator or implementer of it.

⁵⁸¹ This is an irrelevant and irresponsible gloss of the commentator. It was not a simple case. The so-called genuine birth-right was to be violated here. It should have been unequivocally revealed and proclaimed and made known to the actual relevant parties, i.e. Isaac, Esau, and Jacob. What had Rebecca to do in this case!

⁵⁸² It is rather a proof to the contrary. Had Esau known the trickery and the significance of Jacob's plot, he would not have raised such hue and cry or any objections on it at this stage. All this story of selling the birth right etc is obviously a filthy fabrication.

⁵⁸³ How the blessing was Jacob's own? The commentator should not be so unjust and prejudiced in the matter.

⁵⁸⁴ 'Furtively' means: 'stealthily'.

⁵⁸⁵ Very unfair comparison of Hosea's words to the present situation!

wine.⁵⁸⁶

Dr. Dods had so much grudge against Esau that he would have perhaps murdered him on his first contact. Born more than 37 centuries after Esau, he had no option except to spend most of his scholastic competence on character assassination of Esau. Even prior to dealing with Esau, he devoted lot of his time and verbosity to black paint Adam (pbAh) and Noah (pbAh) to the maximum. Here is another picture of Esau from the worthy commentator:

The words of the New Testament, in which it is said that Esau 'found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears', are sometimes misunderstood. They do not mean that he sought what we ordinarily call repentance, a change of mind about the value of the birthright. He had that; it was this that made him weep. What he sought now was some means of undoing what he had done, of canceling the deed of which he repented. His experience does not tell us that a man once sinning as Esau sinned becomes a hardened reprobate whom no good influence can impress or bring to repentance, but it says that the sin so committed leaves irreparable consequences – that no man can live a youth of folly and yet find as much in manhood and maturer years as if he had lived a careful and God-fearing youth. Esau had irrecoverably lost that which he would now have given all he had to possess; and in this, I suppose, he represents half the men who pass through this world.⁵⁸⁷

Rev. Henry Cowan, Prof. of Church History in the Univ. of Aberdeen records the following observations about Esau episode in his article on 'Esau':

The main incidents of E.'s life are (1) Sale of birthright. – Hungry, faint, and feeling as if about to die, he arrives one day, after a (presumably) unsuccessful hunt, at the patriarchal camp, finds his

⁵⁸⁶ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 275-276.

⁵⁸⁷ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 277.

brother cooking lentils, and cries, 'Let me devour some of that same red food.' Jacob taking mean advantage⁵⁸⁸ of E.'s condition, and aware probably of the oracle in his own favour, demands, as price of the pottage, a renunciation of the birthright. The latter included precedence, and authority after his father's death (Gn 27:29); perhaps, also, as in later times, a double portion of the patrimony (Dt 21:17), and the domestic priesthood (Nu 31:12f). Along therewith would naturally, in the case of the chosen family, be transmitted the covenant blessing, which secured for its possessor the divine special favour, with promise of Canaan for his posterity, and the honour of conveying a blessing, through future seed, to 'all the families of the earth' (Gn 12:3, 22:17f). In E.'s eyes the temporal advantages of the birthright were distant and shadowy; to spiritual privilege he was apparently insensible. 'What profit shall the birthright do to me?' he cries, and barter it away with a levity which even the oath exacted by Jacob fails to turn into gravity.⁵⁸⁹

It seems as if most of the expositors of the Bible had no idea that God was there to judge and to punish those who do wrong. Dr. Dods had perhaps made it his life mission to concoct imaginary situations for bitter criticism of prophets like Adam (pbAh), Noah (pbAh), Ishmael (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh) and the patriarchs like Esau. He says:

In contrast with this tenacious⁵⁹⁰, constant character stands Esau, led by impulse, betrayed by appetite, everything by turns and nothing long. To-day despising his birthright, tomorrow breaking his heart for its loss; today vowing he will murder his brother, tomorrow falling on his neck and kissing him; a man you cannot reckon upon, and of too shallow a nature for anything to root itself deeply in.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁸ This is the real and natural observation of the human conscience. Any sane and sober person will make the same observations at the cruel and treacherous exploitation of his elder brother's need and hunger.

⁵⁸⁹ *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Ed. James Hastings, 1:733f.

⁵⁹⁰ 'Tenacious' means: 'retentive; stubborn; holding fast'.

⁵⁹¹ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 262.

Such malicious remarks show that the redactors of the Bible had concocted these events and entered them in the Bible. In this way they prepared the ground for the biblical scholars to make such relentless and biased remarks against such noble and graceful persons. The commentator continues with his onslaught and all his critical and analytic skills to assassinate the character of his despised opponents:

Who does not feel contempt for the great, strong man, declaring he will die if he is required to wait five minutes till his own supper is prepared; forgetting, in the craving of his appetite, every consideration of a worthy kind; oblivious of every thing but his hunger and his food; crying like a great baby, feed me with that red! So it is always with the man who has fallen under the power of sensual appetite. He is always going to die if it is not immediately gratified. He must have his appetite satisfied. No consideration of consequences can be listened to or thought of; the man is helpless in the hands of his appetite – it rules and drives him on, and he is utterly without self control; nothing but physical compulsion can restrain him.⁵⁹²

In spite of obvious contradictions and discrepancies in the narrative of the blessings and the transfer of birthright, most of the Jewish as well as the Christian scholars uphold the same. To support the myth, a Christian scholar has applied an indirect method:

Some modern critics regard the history of E. and Jacob as more or less mythical. Ewald supposes the details about E. were suggested by the rough nature of Idumea (Seir=rough), and by the later relations of Edom and Israel. Kuenen lays stress on the representation of E. and Jacob (with other personages in Gn) as 'progenitors of tribes' – a 'theory of the origin of nations' which 'the historical sense of the present day rejects.' Families, he declares, become nations, not so much by multiplying as by conquest of and combination with other populations. For

⁵⁹² M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 263.

discussion of the general question, see Tribe. As regards Esau in particular, (1) the roughness of Edomites territory may be reasonably traced to the disposition of a progenitor whose rough strength prompted him to choose an abode suited to his habits. (2) Nothing in Gn precludes the supposition that the Edomites (as well as the Israelites) included within their communities the descendants of retainers and immigrants. (3) It is difficult to believe that legends containing so much that is derogatory to the venerated Jacob and favourable (comparatively) to the ancestor of unfriendly Edomites, should grow up among the Jews. Of the stories and features of character which would naturally cluster round E.'s name in Heb. Circles, we have specimens in Rabbinical writings which represent E. as thief, fornicator, blasphemer, etc., as committing five heinous sins in one day, as giving his father dog's flesh for venison, and biting Jacob after latter's return. The impartiality of Gn in revealing much that is attractive about E. and repulsive (even to an Eastern mind about Jacob, suggests a substantially historical record which could hold its ground in spite of its (to the Jews) unpalatable character.⁵⁹³

All such comments show that the Jews as well as the Christians have miserably failed to look at Esau through plain glasses. They show complete blindness to see anything good in him. All imaginable wickedness and sins have been attributed to Esau to black paint him and to propagate slavery of his descendants to deprive them from claiming any share in the property or blessings promised to the descendants of Abraham (pbAh). In view of this, the curse of Isaac attributing slavery to Esau has no credentials to be accepted as revelation from the Lord. It must, therefore, be termed as a product of the Israelites to denigrate their rivals.

⁵⁹³ *A Dic of the Bible*, Ed. James Hastings, 1:734.

d) Jacob (pbAh) the Jew

Dr. Dods has taken another turn to describe the character of Jacob (pbAh) by depicting him as a Jew.

The character of Jacob is easily understood. It has frequently been remarked of him that he is thoroughly a Jew, that in him you find the good and bad features of the Jewish character very prominent and conspicuous. He has that mingling of craft and endurance which has enabled his descendants to use for their own ends those who have wronged and persecuted them. The Jew has, with some justice and some injustice, been credited with an obstinate and unscrupulous resolution to forward his own interests, and there can be no question that in this respect Jacob is the typical Jew ruthlessly taking advantage of his brother, watching and waiting till he was sure of his victim; deceiving his blind father, and robbing him of what he had intended for his favourite son; outwitting the grasping Laban, and making at least his own out of all attempts to rob him; unable to meet his brother without stratagem; not forgetting prudence even when the honor of his family is stained; and not thrown off his guard even by his true and deep affection for Joseph.⁵⁹⁴

Constancy, persistence, dogged tenacity is certainly the striking feature of Jacob's character. He could wait and bide his time; he could retain one purpose year after year till it was accomplished.⁵⁹⁵

In spite of elaborate apologies for Isaac (pbAh), Rebecca and Jacob (pbAh), Dr. Dods could not avoid to acquiesce⁵⁹⁶ that:

In the story told us so graphically in this page, we see the family whom God has blessed sink to this low level, and betrayed by family jealousies into unseemly strife on the most sacred ground. Each member of the family plans his own wicked device, and God

⁵⁹⁴ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 260.

⁵⁹⁵ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 261.

⁵⁹⁶ 'Acquiesce' means: 'to agree; to consent'.

by the evil of one defeats the evil of another and saves His own purpose to bless the race from being frittered away⁵⁹⁷ and lost.⁵⁹⁸

Thus after numerous efforts to alleviate the immoralities alleged to the patriarchs and their families, Dr. Dods came up with the plain admission of the depravity alleged to them. His first priority was to uphold each and every assertion in the Bible as the true word of God. He, therefore, had no provision to think or to comment that all such filthy material is the handiwork of the Israelites themselves and the same must not be accepted as the word of God. Instead of discarding the obvious fabrication, both the Jewish as well as the Christian writers have spoiled thousands of pages to black paint the patriarchs only to uphold the infallibility of the scripture. They, however, failed miserably to defend the untruth and to reconcile mutually contradictory statements in the Genesis. Their insistence on blind faith against reason and facts has not only reduced the credibility of the Holy Record but also has been the main factor to promote secularism in the west.

⁵⁹⁷ 'Fritter' means: 'waste'; and 'fritter away' means: 'throw away'.

⁵⁹⁸ M. Dods, *The Expositor's Bible*, 1903, p. 267.

Chapter-13

Ch-13. Background Necessitating the Curse

a) The Background of the Curse

Even a cursory glance at the history of the Israelites reveals that acquisition of land, wealth and power has always been the aim of the Israelites. They trace their origin from Abraham (pbAh) who was at Haran when he received his call from the Lord.

The LORD said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's home, and go to a land that I am going to show you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, But I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations.'⁵⁹⁹

In response to God's call, Abraham (pbAh) left for Canaan and took along Lot (pbAh), Sarah his wife '*and all the wealth and all the slaves they had acquired in Haran*'⁶⁰⁰.

Abram traveled through the land until he came to the sacred tree of Moreh, the holy place at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were still living in the land.) The LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'This is the country that I am going to give to your descendants.' Then Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who

⁵⁹⁹ Gen 12:1-3 GNB.

⁶⁰⁰ Gen 12:5 GNB.

had appeared to him.⁶⁰¹

This shows that the Lord had taken Abraham (pbAh) to Canaan to show him the country he was giving to his descendants. The Land of Canaan being the main purpose of life of the Israelites had, therefore, always been the bone of contention between them and many other original occupants of the same and also other nations surrounding Canaan. To claim the exclusive right on the blessings of Abraham (pbAh) and especially the land of Canaan, the Israelites have always been refuting rights of other nations including the genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh). They, therefore, tried to disqualify all the contenders on one pretext or the other.

After staying sometime in Canaan, Abraham (pbAh) had gone to Egypt and some time thereafter, Lot (pbAh) parted from him to settle at Sodom and Gomorrah. It is said that four kings of the East had defeated five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiin and Zoar and took away everything in Sodom and Gomorrah and certain captives along with Lot (pbAh), the nephew of Abraham (pbAh). Abraham (pbAh) was returning after rescuing Lot (pbAh) from the four Kings⁶⁰² when Melchizedeq the priest king of Salem came forward to bless him on the way. Abraham (pbAh) was childless till then and was perhaps suffering from some depression when he had a vision and the Lord said to him:

Do not be afraid, Abram. I will shield you from danger and give you a great reward."⁶⁰³

In spite of the said assurance, Abraham (pbAh) seemed to be skeptic about the fulfillment of the promise of the Lord. The Lord, therefore, told him to bring a cow, a goat, a ram, a dove

⁶⁰¹ Gen 12:6-7 GNB.

⁶⁰² Gen 14.

⁶⁰³ Gen 15:1 GNB.

and a pigeon which Abraham (pbAh) cut to pieces and in a vision, God made further promises with him. Eventually, the Lord made the following covenant with him:

In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.⁶⁰⁴

The so called covenant, therefore, bestowed divinely granted rights on the Israelites for the land of Canaan with full justification to dispossess others. Even so the lands mentioned above had to be inherited by all the descendants of Abraham (pbAh). Since it was intolerable for the Israelites that other descendants of Abraham (pbAh) may claim any share in the land or blessings on Abraham (pbAh), therefore, conscious efforts were made to oust or to disqualify each of the contenders in the land or the blessings promised to Abraham (pbAh). After denouncing all the nations of Canaan through fabricating a curse from Noah (pbAh) they turned to Hagar and Ishmā'el (pbAh) to denounce them. Illegitimacy was ascribed to Ishmaelites, the Moabites and the Ammonites. Ultimately, they had to invent a curse from Isaac (pbAh) on Esau and his descendants being strong contenders with the Israelites for the lands in Edom and its surroundings. The area stretched from Wadi-e-Zerad to the Gulf of Aqabah for about a hundred miles and extended to both sides of Arabah or wilderness of Edom, the great depression connecting the Dead Sea to the Red Sea. Aside from good cultivable lands, it was mostly a rugged mountainous area with peaks rising to 3500 feet. While Selah was capital of the territory, other important towns were Bozrah and Teman.

⁶⁰⁴ Gen. 15:18-21 KJV.

It was during the exodus that the Israelites sought permission to travel by King's Highway passing through their land. In spite of the fact that the Edomites had refused the request of the Israelites yet the Israelites were forbidden by the Lord to abhor his Edomite Brother.⁶⁰⁵

About 300 years after the Exodus, King Saul (1030-1010 BC) initiated the fight against the Edomites but David (pbAh) succeeded to conquer Edom and put garrisons throughout the Land.⁶⁰⁶ There was considerable slaughter of the Edomites while David's commander remaining in Edom for 6 months had cut off almost every male in Edom with the exception of certain people including royal prince Haddad who fled to Egypt and became a source of trouble for Solomon (pbAh).⁶⁰⁷ Solomon (pbAh) exploited copper mines in the region and built a port at Ezion-geber which was utilized to bring about 16 tons of gold from Ophir.⁶⁰⁸

Edom rebelled against Judah during the reign of King Jehoram (848-841 BC) but in spite of being defeated in the battle, the Edomites had the respite of some 40 years. Later on, King Amaziah of Judah (796-781 B.C.) invaded Edom and besides slaying about 10,000 Edomites in the valley of salt, he killed another 10,000 Edomites by throwing them from the cliff of Selah.⁶⁰⁹ Subsequently, the Edomites invaded Judah and carried off the captives (2Ch 28:17). Judah never again recovered Edom. Since Edom rejoiced on the fall of Judah, therefore, prophets like Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Amaziah had been

⁶⁰⁵ Deu 23:7-8.

⁶⁰⁶ 2Sa 8:13.

⁶⁰⁷ 1Ki 11:14-22.

⁶⁰⁸ 1Ki 9:26-28.

⁶⁰⁹ 2Ki 14:7, 2Chr 25:11-12.

denouncing them. Later on, even Edom fell into the Arab hands during the 5th century B.C. and in the 3rd Century B.C. was overrun by the Nabateans.

Subsequent to the independence of Edom, the Israelites felt the dire need to establish better moral or legal rights on the lands of Canaan and Edom. They, therefore, developed the stratagem to invoke divine blessings in favor of Israel through inventing the prophecy of the superiority of Jacob (pbAh) over Esau⁶¹⁰, his sale of birthright to Jacob (pbAh),⁶¹¹ blessings for him and a curse of slavery for Esau and his descendants⁶¹², i.e. Edomites. All this was necessitated due to the fact that the Edomites had continued to give a tough time to Israel as their opponents from the time of Exodus to the beginning of the 5th century BC. Anyhow, the non-fulfillment of the prophecies⁶¹³ to make Esau and his descendants slaves of Jacob (pbAh) implies that the same were concoctions of the Israelites instead of being the word of God.

It is said that the Edomites were holding the entire land of Seir/Edom, when during the Exodus, Moses (pbAh) sought their permission to travel on the King's Highway passing through their land:

And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers: And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we *are* in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy

⁶¹⁰ Gen 25:21-26.

⁶¹¹ Gen 25:27-34.

⁶¹² Gen ch 27.

⁶¹³ Gen 25:23, 27:37, 40.

border: Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's *high* way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without *doing* any thing *else*, go through on my feet. And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.⁶¹⁴

In spite of the said refusal and the hostility of the Edomites, the Lord had commanded the Israelites not to detest an Edomite '*for he is your brother*'.⁶¹⁵ A Christian source has it that:

Jehovah referred to them as Israel's 'brothers' and Edomite land rights were to be held inviolate⁶¹⁶ by the Israelites advancing through the wilderness, since Jehovah had granted Edom's descendants Mount Seir as a holding, Deut, 2:1-8.⁶¹⁷

It further states:

In the wilderness of Sinai Peninsula, Israel's first armed opposition came from a far-ranging Edomite tribe, the Amalekites a source of trouble for Israel through out their history [Ex 17:8-16].
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It shows that the Amalekites being a far off tribe of the Edomites had been a source of trouble throughout the History

⁶¹⁴ Num 20:14-21 KJV.

⁶¹⁵ Deu 23:7-8.

⁶¹⁶ 'Inviolable' means: 'unhurt; unprofaned; unbroken'.

⁶¹⁷ *Aid to Bible Understanding*, (Pennsylvania, watch Tower Bible Society, 1971) '*Seir and Edom*' p. 485.

⁶¹⁸ *Aid to Bible Understanding*, '*Seir and Edom*' p. 486.

of the Israelites. This must, therefore, be taken as another reason to stigmatize Esau the ancestor of both the Amalekites and the Edomites.

b) Edomites had Dukes much before the Israelites

Bible also tells us that even after the death of Esau, his descendants held effective control over Edom for a long time with Sela⁶¹⁹, its capital, and Bozrah⁶²⁰ and Teman⁶²¹ as important towns in the territory. Dukes emerged there quite early.⁶²² The Edomites also had kings before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.⁶²³ The kingdom of Edomites was well established in the region when the Israelites arrived there as fugitive slaves from Egypt. They were destitute and homeless wanderers in the wilderness seeking permission of the Edomites to travel on the King's Highway passing through their land. Due to proscription⁶²⁴ from the Lord, the Israelites did not molest the Edomites till the time of King Saul. Subsequently, King David subdued them but about a hundred years thereafter they again reestablished their monarchy and remained in an oscillating position with the Israelites for a long time.

Eventually, the Arabs conquered the Edomites in the 5th century BC. The lands including lower southern parts of Judea, therefore,

⁶¹⁹ Sela was probably the city later known as Petra.

⁶²⁰ Bozrah is in Edom. It is the city of Jobab the son of Zerah, one of the early kings of that nation.

⁶²¹ Teman means 'south'. It was a city or a country which was probably a southern portion of the land of Edom.

⁶²² Gen. 26:15-19, 40-43; 1 Ch. 1:51-54.

⁶²³ Gen. 26:31-39; 1 Ch. 1:43-49.

⁶²⁴ 'Proscription' means: 'condemnation; ban'.

remained under them forming the province known as Idumea. In later periods, King Herod the Idumean succeeded to rule almost entire Palestine, i.e. all the tribes of the Israelites as a king from 37 to 4 BC. His sons continued to rule over Judea and other provinces of the Israelites for some decades after him. This again refutes the allegation of slavery against the Edomites.

Since the curse from Isaac (pbAh), Gen 27:29, 37:39-40 did not materialize in the actual history of the world, therefore, it cannot be taken as truly recorded revelation or prediction from prophet Isaac (pbAh). John Locke (1632-1704), the greatest among the English philosophers has observed that Esau had never been subjected to Jacob (pbAh). He says:

117. 2. Because this Place Gen 27. 29 brought by our A. concerns not at all the Dominion of one Brother over the other nor the Subjection of Esau to Jacob. For 'tis plain in the History that Esau was never subject to Jacobs but lived apart in Mount Seir where he founded a distinct People and Government and was himself Prince over them as much as Jacob was in his own Family. This Text if considered can never be understood of Esau himself or the Dominion of Jacob over him: For the Words *Brethren and Sons of thy Mother*, could not be used literally by Isaac who knew Jacob had only one Brother and these Words are so far from being true in a literal Sense or establishing any Dominion in Jacob over Esau that in the Story we find the quite contrary for Gen 32. Jacob several times calls Esau Lord and himself his Servant and Gen 33 he bowed himself seven times to the ground to Esau. Whether Esau then were a Subject and Vassal, nay (as our A. tells us all Subjects are) Slaves to Jacob, and Jacob his Sovereign Prince by Birth right, I leave the Reader to judge and to believe if he can that these Words of *Isaac be Lord over thy Brethren and let thy Mother's Sons bow down to thee*, confirm'd Jacob in a Sovereignty over Esau upon the account of the Birth right he had got from him.

118. He that reads the Story of Jacob and Esau will find there was

never any Jurisdiction or Authority that either of them had over the other after their Father's Death; they lived with the Friendship and Equality of Brethren neither Lord neither Slave to his Brother but independent each of other were both heads of their distinct Families where they received no Laws from one another but lived separately and were the Roots out of which sprang two distinct People under two distinct Governments.⁶²⁵

Since the curses and predictions about destruction of the rivals of the Israelites had very rarely been fulfilled in the actually history of the World, therefore, all such assertions reflect only the ambitions of the Israelites rather than the true word of God or the prophet to whom they ascribe the same.

⁶²⁵ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge; Texts in the History of Political Thought, 1988), p. 226.

Conclusion

Lot of time and space has already been devoted to probe into the allegations and curses inflicted by the Israelites on the Canaanites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Ishmaelites and the Edomites as their major rivals. They did so to deny their opponents, the parity of rights on the lands or blessings of God promised through Abraham (pbAh). The Israelites did not spare to downgrade any nation around them who had any conflict with them. They, therefore, also denounced and cursed the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Amalekites, the Midianites, the Sudaneans, the Egyptians, the people of Damascus, tribes of Kedar, people of Elam and the Phoenicians etc. Due to the enmity of the Israelites against them, the assertions expressing hatred and ill-will towards their rivals reflect only the ambitions of the Israelites rather than true prediction of God or some patriarch.

During their slavery extending over about three to four hundred years in Egypt, the Israelites had developed a deep-rooted sense of deprivation and an inferiority complex. They had long been confined to one place, cut off from the rest of the world. Being deprived of the freedom to move and to see other regions around them, they had limited knowledge about other people in the world or about the geography of the planet earth. Due to their narrow vision of God, His attributes and expanse of the universe, they formed unduly exaggerated view of man and the significance of earth. Earth was believed to be the centre of the universe around which revolved the sun, the moon and the stars. They held that man was created in the likeness of God

and resembled Him. Greek, Roman, Egyptian and many other mythologies of the pagan world around them endorsed the same view. A prominent scholar writes:

This conception of gods had been falling out of favor among Greek philosophers since Xenophanes⁶²⁶, five centuries before Philo's time, noted its arbitrariness. 'If horses and cattle did theology', he had asserted, 'horses would draw the form of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle.'⁶²⁷

Likeness of man with God (anthropomorphism) had, therefore, been one of the major stumbling blocks debarring the Israelites from comprehending the omnipotence, infinite greatness, eternity and absolute transcendence of God over man and all other creatures in the universe.

The erroneous notion of God's resemblance with man had immense effect on overall conduct and characteristics of the Israelites throughout the ages. God in the likeness of man

⁶²⁶ According to *Chambers Biogr. Dic* 'Xenophanes' (c.570–c.480BC) was:

Greek philosopher, poet, and religious thinker: born in Colophon, Ionia, Asia Minor, where he probably lived until the Persian conquest of the region (546 BC), he seems then to have lived a wandering life round the Mediterranean, perhaps settling in Sicily for a while and visiting Elea in southern Italy. He wrote poetry, fragments of which survive, and seems to have been an independent and original thinker, though later traditions tried to claim him as member either of the Ionian or the Eleatic school. He attacked the anthropomorphism of popular religion and Homeric mythology (pointing out that each race credits the gods with their own physical characteristics, and that animals would do the same), posited by way of reaction a single deity who somehow energizes the world ('without toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind'), and made some bold speculations about the successive inundations of the Earth based on the observation of fossils. His rather bizarre astronomical theories suggested that a new Sun rises each day and that there is a different Moon for each region or zone of the flat Earth, all the heavenly bodies having been created from clouds which were set on fire (p. 1987).

⁶²⁷ Robert Wright, *The Evolution of God* (London; Clays Ltd, St Ives plc, 2009), p. 218.

stood deprived of His transcendence as Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent God of the Universe. He could take no direct cognizance of transgressions of the individuals or the communities. Thoughts and actions of men remained hidden from Him. Humankind could, therefore, feel free from accountability or punishment in the world or in the hereafter. Instead of wholehearted devotion, or faithful service to the Lord, it was more useful to rely on one's cunning to improve his fate. Such were the defective views about God that formed the background to develop the specific conduct and characteristics of the Israelites.

The Israelites proclaimed themselves as the first born sons of God and also the only people of God. Foreigners were neither allowed to share their God nor could they be granted the status of the Israelites. They worshiped one God, i.e. Yahweh who was exclusively the God of the Israelites. Yahweh was, therefore, obliged to stand with them in the battlefield and to protect their temporal gains even when they were transgressing His law. No consideration of justice or morality could deprive the Israelites from their interests. To establish worldwide kingdom of God had always been the cherished desire of the Israelites. They, however, aspired for an Israelo-centric world where kingdom of God means kingdom of Israel. As such, prominent role of the Israelites in the world politics had never been forgotten by them. A scholar has, therefore, observed:

Second Isaiah had wanted the world's people to witness Yahweh's grandeur, and thus find a salvation of sorts, but the idea was that they would then bow to Zion in subservience to Israel's god and hence to Israel.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁸ Robert Wright, *The Evolution of God*, (2009) p. 258.

Other nations were assigned other Gods who were lesser gods as compared to Yahweh. Keeping in view such racial exceptionalism of the Israelites, we can better describe them as henotheists⁶²⁹ than the monotheists.

It was to elevate their own race that the Israelites reduced the domain of Yahweh to conform to the size of the ethnic community. Ignorance combined with selfishness made them over-assess the significance of man and earth as compared to ineffability and transcendence of God. The instinct of exclusiveness of the Israelites, therefore, opened the highway towards polytheism against strict monotheism preached by Moses (pbAh) and all the prophets of the Israelites.

Yahweh the personal or tribal God of the Israelites was very keen to live among his people⁶³⁰ in the wilderness, in the temple at Jerusalem and even during their exile to Babylonia. The Israelites felt elated to keep their God confined or locked up in the sanctuary among their community. It has also been reported that:

And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.⁶³¹

Offering of bread and wine as food for Yahweh had always been the regular part of worship of the Israelites.⁶³² The Lord was pleased with the odor of the food and (the burning) flesh.⁶³³

⁶²⁹ 'Henotheism' can be described as 'belief in or adoption of a particular god in a polytheistic system as the god of a tribe, class etc'.

⁶³⁰ Exo 29:45.

⁶³¹ Num 10:35-36 KJV.

⁶³² Exo 29:38-40, Lev 24:5-9.

⁶³³ Exo 29:41.

The OT has numerous anthropomorphic⁶³⁴ concepts about God suggesting forgetfulness, grief and repentance to Him.⁶³⁵ God repeatedly comes down to earth to verify the facts.⁶³⁶ He walks on foot like man and eats with His companions at the tent of Abraham (pbAh) in Canaan.⁶³⁷ These and many other references to God in the OT are most graphically human stories applied to God. The Israelites might have borrowed such concepts from their neighbors in the Middle East. Moses (pbAh) definitely did not teach the anthropomorphic concept of God nor could he think that the Lord would relinquish His sovereignty over the entire universe only to assume the status of the tribal God of small people holding a small piece of land on earth.

The concepts of the Israelites about God and the universe were so much antiquated and faulty that they could not match with the omnipotence, omniscience, and effective control of the sovereign Lord over infinitely large universe. No one today can agree with the traditional faith that the universe, the earth, and the human beings were all created within the same week some 6000 years ago⁶³⁸ as suggested by the Bible. Rapid advancement of knowledge has changed our vision about the universe, God, and the humankind. All the revealed religions believe in the eternity of God. As regards the creation of the universe, the scientists assign about 13.7 billion years to the so called time line of the '*Big Bang*' when the initial conditions

⁶³⁴ 'Anthropomorphism' means: 'Ascribing human form or attributes to a being or thing not human; to conceive about a deity to resemble a human form.'

⁶³⁵ Gen 6:6, Gen 8:21, 9:14-16, Gen 32:14.

⁶³⁶ Gen 11:5 and Gen 18:20-21.

⁶³⁷ Gen 18:1-8.

⁶³⁸ According to Archbishop James Ussher, the date of the creation of man was 4004 BC; while Franck Classen assessed it as 3973 BC (Dr. R. C. Wetzell, *A Chronicle of Biblical Christianity*, The ages Digital Library History, USA, 1997).

occurred and the universe started expanding on all sides constantly. The age of our solar system and earth has been estimated at about 4.6 billion years. The Sun is about 1.3 million times the size of the planet earth. Our solar system occupies only a small space in the galaxy commonly named as the '*milky way*' which consists of billions of stars. Scientists tell us that there are billions of galaxies throughout the universe. Although total number of stars, large and small, can never be ascertained exactly, yet it is assessed that there exist in the universe more than hundred billion stars equal or bigger in size than our sun. It is worth noting here that our earth is not one of the trillions of stars mentioned above. It is just a small planet orbiting around one of the stars named the sun.

Light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles (about 300,000 kilometers) per second. The expanse of the universe can be assessed from the fact that the light from certain far distant stars in the universe takes more than 15 billion years to reach us. The life of our earth is much less as compared to other heavenly bodies. As regards its size, it is just like a spec of dust in the vast expanse of the universe. Significance of earth and man can, therefore, be appreciated from the same.

The discoveries of scientists, astronomers and astrophysicists during the 19th and 20th centuries have brought drastic changes in our concepts about the age and expanse of the universe. Better awareness about the life, the size, the knowledge, the mortality, the imperfections as well as insignificance of man as compared to God and the universe have changed our concepts about man's likeness with the Infinite Being. Man is imperfect, mortal and a tiny creature subject to numerous limitations on earth. A finite being like man cannot, therefore, evolve or transform unto the infinitely great, transcendent and eternal God of the universe. As such man's likeness or his union with God has no plausibility in it.

The concepts of the OT about God's domain and His attributes especially His likeness with man⁶³⁹ do not corroborate with the greatness of God or with His eternity and sovereignty over unimaginably vast universe. The Geocentric view, i.e. the earth as the centre of the universe based on traditional faith that '*the earth is set firmly in place and cannot be moved*'⁶⁴⁰ stood shattered by discoveries of the scientists like Copernicus and Galileo Galilee during 16th and 17th centuries A.D. They professed that instead of the sun and stars moving around the earth, it was earth and other planets which revolved around the sun. Subsequently, even the Sun-centric theory of the middle ages was discarded by the scientists. They believe that all heavenly bodies are revolving around the centers of their galaxies which exceed hundred billion in number, each consisting of billions of stars. All galaxies, too, are revolving in their own orbits and moving constantly towards an unknown goal. All such facts suggest absolute transcendence of God of the universe over all His creatures.

The traditional Big Bang cosmology suggests expansion of the universe from a single cosmic unit. Scientists observe perfect unity and harmony in the universe. It is also astonishing to observe the flawless planning, perfect design, smooth functioning, punctuality, programming and subjection of all heavenly bodies and the earth to a single law. This must, therefore, be an irrefutable proof of the absolute oneness of God. Had there been more than one god, there would have been chaos instead of perfect harmony in the Universe. God says:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ.⁶⁴¹

Had there been in heaven or on earth any deities other than God,

⁶³⁹ Gen 1:26-27.

⁶⁴⁰ 1-Chr 16:30.

⁶⁴¹ Al-Qur'ān 21:22.

both [those realms would surely have fallen into ruin! But limitless in His glory is God, enthroned in His awesome almightiness far] above anything that men may devise by way of definition!⁶⁴²

The Lord has effectively denied the existence of any other God besides Him and also the possibility of a son of God as follows:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا أَذْهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ.⁶⁴³

Never did God take unto Himself any offspring, nor has there ever been any deity side by side with Him: [for, had there been any,] lo! each deity would surely have stood apart [from the others] in whatever it had created, and they would surely have [tried to] overcome one another! Limitless in His glory is God, [far] above anything that men may devise by way of definition,⁶⁴⁴

The word of God quoted above denies any plurality of gods or multiplicity of laws operating in the universe. Like trillions of other stars or planets, our earth, too, is subject to the same law. Since everything in the universe is under the control of one and the only Lord God of the universe, therefore, all functions of nature are in perfect harmony with each other in the heavens as well as on earth. Only humankind enjoyed the freedom to choose between good and evil and to act accordingly. Most of the human beings, therefore, opted to deny absolute oneness of God or universality of His law. Acute sense of acquisitiveness and selfishness of humankind found its expression in personal, tribal or local gods owned exclusively by the communities who devised them. Shortsightedness of humankind gave birth to their national Gods/gods. Clash of interests between the nations and the instinct to assert their

⁶⁴² Al-Qur'ān 21:22 (tr. Allama Asad).

⁶⁴³ Al-Qur'ān 23:91.

⁶⁴⁴ Al-Qur'ān 23:91 (tr. Allama Asad).

primacy over others caused unending animosity, trouble and turmoil on earth. God said:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ⁶⁴⁵

Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of men have earned, that (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil).⁶⁴⁶

In spite of repeated chastisements inflicted on the transgressors, majority among the humankind refused to turn to the Lord or to dispense justice in accordance with the universal and unchanging law of the Lord which alone could ensure peace and prosperity of humankind on earth. The Lord guided us as under:

فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا⁶⁴⁷

(...). If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if ye do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination.⁶⁴⁸

Instead of determining our rights in accordance with the universal Law of the Lord, we have been following our own lusts and selfish desires leading us to devastation and misery again and again. Neglect of the Law of the Lord and lack of fear of our accountability before Him has caused chaos in the world. Man's selfishness has exposed him to impending nuclear holocaust⁶⁴⁹ which may exterminate him from earth. In the words of Martin

⁶⁴⁵ Al-Qur'ān 30:41.

⁶⁴⁶ Al-Qur'ān 30:41 (tr. Yusuf Ali).

⁶⁴⁷ Al-Qur'ān 4:59.

⁶⁴⁸ Al-Qur'ān 4:59 (tr. Yusuf Ali).

⁶⁴⁹ 'Holocaust' means: 'sacrifice wholly burnt; great or total destruction, esp. by fire; holocaust a massive slaughter, esp. the genocide of European Jews by the Nazis during World War II.

Luther King,⁶⁵⁰ our problem is that '*We have guided missiles and misguided men.*'⁶⁵¹

God sent His prophets to each and every nation in the world to guide them towards the straight path until the final and complete guidance for all times was delivered. Our refusal to obey the commandments of the Lord may, therefore, lead us to utter destruction with our own hands. God had declared that:

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمِّهَا رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَىٰ إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ.⁶⁵²

Yet, withal, thy Sustainer would never destroy a community without having [first] raised in its midst an apostle who would convey unto them Our messages; and never would We destroy a community unless its people are wont to do wrong [to one another].⁶⁵³

In this respect, the Lord also stressed that:

هَلْ يَهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الظَّالِمُونَ.⁶⁵⁴

[But then-] will any but evildoing folk [ever] be destroyed?⁶⁵⁵

This shows that the Lord does not destroy any one except the 'الظَّالِمُونَ', i.e. the unjust, the tyrants, the oppressors and the wicked ones. Humankind bent upon wickedness and devising schemes to destroy others is, therefore, living constantly under the fear of its total extinction from the earth.

It was the prime obligation of the Israelites to preserve the text of the law and to obey all the commandments of the Lord. Had they preserved the Law, the Law would have preserved them. The only

⁶⁵⁰ (January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968).

⁶⁵¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Strength to Love* (Cleveland, OH: Fount Books, 1963), p. 73.

⁶⁵² Al-Qur'ān 28:59.

⁶⁵³ Al-Qur'ān 28:59 (tr. Allama Asad).

⁶⁵⁴ Al-Qur'ān 6:47.

⁶⁵⁵ Al-Qur'ān 6:47 (tr. Allama Asad).

sure way to their supremacy over other nations was obedience to the Lord. Their lack of trust in the Lord and failure to abide by the covenant was, therefore, the main cause of their debasement. It is about such people that God has said:

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا.⁶⁵⁶

What aileth you that ye hope not toward Allah for dignity When He created you by (divers) stages?⁶⁵⁷

وَلَا هُنَا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ.⁶⁵⁸

Be not, then, faint of heart, and grieve not:⁹⁹ for you are bound to rise high if you are [truly] believers.⁶⁵⁹

Instead of proclaiming their greatness by belittling others, the Israelites should have turned to the Lord who alone could exalt them over their rivals. Their denigration of other nations earned them nothing except hatred and animosity of the people towards them. They ignored the commandment of the Lord that:

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt [not] in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.⁶⁶⁰

It was, perhaps, due to the said background that Hillel, the revered Jewish teacher of the 1st century c.e. summarized the wisdom of Torah for the Jews as:

that which is hateful to you, do not do unto your fellow human

⁶⁵⁶ Al-Qur'ān 71:14.

⁶⁵⁷ Al-Qur'ān 71:14 (tr. Pikthal).

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Qruan 3:139.

⁶⁵⁹ Al-Qruan 3:139 (tr. Allamah Asad).

⁶⁶⁰ Lev 19:17-18 KJV.

being. (ARN, Version B, Chap 26, 27a; for Hillel, see Shab., 31a).⁶⁶¹

Jesus, too, preached the same in the following words:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.⁶⁶²

All such precepts allude to the fact that the commandments justifying genocide, elimination or denigration of the rivals of the Israelites were self fabricated proclamations of the Israelites. Such assertions are incompatible with the all encompassing mercy and blessings of the Lord who is the cherisher and sustainer of all His creatures throughout the universe. We need to get rid of our niggardliness to exclude anyone from the blessings of the Lord. God is always pleased to extend His bounteous blessings to all His creatures. No extravagant generosity on His part can ever exhaust His resources. God declares:

(...). O My servants, even if the first amongst you and the last amongst you and the whole human race of yours and that of jinns also all stand in one plain ground and you ask Me and I confer upon every person what he asks for, it would not. in any way, cause any loss to Me (even less) than that which is caused to the ocean by dipping the needle in it.⁶⁶³

The Israelites, therefore, had no justification to apply their narrow vision to God. He has unlimited resources to fulfill the needs of all His creatures. He says:

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ.⁶⁶⁴

There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance dependeth on Allah: He knoweth the time and place of its definite

⁶⁶¹ Byron L. Sherwin, *Jewish Ethics for the Twenty-first Century* (Syracuse University Press, 2000), p. 11.

⁶⁶² Matt 5:44 KJV.

⁶⁶³ Sahih Muslim, Ch. 13, Book 32, Hadith Number 6246.

⁶⁶⁴ Al-Qur'an 11:6.

abode and its temporary deposit: All is in a clear Record.⁶⁶⁵

God has, therefore, taken on Him to sustain all living beings on earth. From whale to virus, everything is provided with the sustenance by the Lord. The Israelites, therefore, had no cause to worry about shortfall or depletion of God's resources if other people shared with them the bounteous blessings of the Lord.

As Creator of the heavens and the earth, God's benevolence is available to every living being on earth irrespective of race, region, color or belief of the people. His mercy, justice and sustenance cannot be denied to anyone during the life on earth. Anyhow, those who surrender themselves before the will of the Lord are likely to be awarded with blessings and entrance to the eternal house of happiness in the hereafter. Only those who deny the Lord and disobey His commandments are likely to be doomed to Hell in the life to come.

Pride has been the root cause of disobedience. The first sin committed by Satan was pride, which was the product of the fallacious notion that his genus or race was superior to the humankind. He forgot that it was entirely the prerogative of the Creator to exalt any of His slaves over others. Only the Lord possesses the authority to determine superiority of certain individuals or nations over others. By our own assertions of superiority, we are likely to follow in the steps of Satan. Not only this but we also need to revise our policies to eliminate or humiliate other nations without any justification for the same. By throwing stones and filth on others, we cannot expect flowers and fragrance in response.

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Qur'ān 11:6 (tr. Yusuf Ali).

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